Differing Views on the Study of Art History in Thailand

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Abstract

This study concerns the various controversies that have arisen in the study of the art history in the different schools in Thailand. It is assumed that there are two main opposing schools among Thai art historians. One school, which faithfully follows doctrines formulated by pioneer researchers such as Prince Damrong Rajanubhab and George Coedes, was established at Silpakorn University. Another school, which constantly produces works conflicting with the former school, is rooted in Thammasat University.

This thesis aims to clarify which factors have made the research outcomes from the two schools so extremely different and sometimes contradicting. Among these factors, the cultural and political contexts of development, methodologies and the characterisation of art play primary roles. With these factors taken into consideration, it will emerge that the study of art history in Thailand is a much contested field with many unresolved controversies.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Aim and scope of the study of art history in Thailand

A leading figure in promoting and popularising the study of art history in Thailand, HRH Princess Sirindhon, has indicated that the study of art history is useful for stimulating the feeling of nationalism (Sirindhon 1975, 5), as well as for investigating the past in its many aspects, including political, cultural and religious matters. This thesis aims to elucidate important features of how Thai art history as a discipline has taken shape in Thailand. As though to develop a line of thought suggested in Princess Sirindhon's comment, a critical part of the story will involve questions of nationalistic sensibilities which I will show have contributed to currently contested visions of the Thai artistic past.

Before taking up the questions above, we must first ask about how Thai art history relates to a wider context of traditional Thai historiography. It is widely accepted by Thai historians that, following from the *tamnan* (legend) genre of folk history discussed in Chapter 2, the disciplinary study of history and the writing of historical accounts of the past began systematically in Thailand in the 19th century. Such premodern studies were referred to as '*phongsawadan*'.[1] In this period a distinction between history as a

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[1] *Phongsawadan* is derived from Sanskrit words: *vamsa* and *avatara*. *Vamsa* means family, and *avatara* is a word used to call the incarnation of the god Narai. It should be noted here that it has been believed since the Ayutthaya period of Thai history that each king was the god Narai who was born in the human world. This belief, however, declined during the late 19th century.

discipline and the historical texts and sources which it employed was not so categorical as later on.

Later, in 1907 when the Antiquarian Association (*Borannakhadi Samosorn*) was founded and a broad type of 'antiquarian' scholarly study became a concern, the term '*borannakhadi*' was used for this sort of study instead of '*phongsawadan*', a term which then became confined to a genre of historical writings (Somkiat 1984, 92).[2] '*Borannakhadi*' brought together the subjects related to history, archaeology and art history. Although these three subjects were separated later as each of them had different scope and methodology, they all had some characteristics in common. Therefore, to have a broad understanding of the commonalities and differences between the three subjects, as recognised in the Thai context, will bring about a better insight in the objectives and scope of the study of art history.

The common characteristic of these three subjects is an attempt to evaluate the reality of human social behaviour in the past. All three subjects have given much emphasis to 'time' as it surrounds the social behaviour of humans. Thus each of the three subjects has aimed to study human behaviour in a particular aspect and over certain periods of time. Incidents of interest to these subjects have occurred in different times and places. Such incidents may be attributed to different factors according to the concerns and interests of each subject area.

The different characteristics of history, archaeology and art history are the scope of the data used in the study. While Thai historiography is substantively based on written

accounts, such as inscriptions, legends or the royal chronicles, archaeology, as the data for study, uses both natural objects, such as human skeletons or water-rounded pebble tools, as well as man-made artefacts. This is the case regardless of whether or not such materials originated as an intentional record of events. In contrast to the two other branches, the sources of art history are grounded in work intentionally created for what might be considered aesthetic purposes, i.e. created as works of art. (What 'aesthetic' might include in the Thai context is pursued in the following section.)

For Thailand, the study of art history is seen as the study works of art in order to understand the iconography and evolution of art styles in each specific time and space. Further, the outcome of such studies will be interpreted as telling us about human behaviour in the past. Relevant questions will thus be: In which period and society were specific works of art produced? What is the type of human cultural behaviour to which the art is related?

1.2. Art in Thai culture

Art historians have defined 'art' as 'the work that men create with an aim to impress themselves and others' (Srisak et al. 1983, 146) or as 'a man-made object demanding to be experienced aesthetically' (Panofsky cited in Piriya 1987a, 1).[3] However, it appears that for Thai culture before the 19th century there was no 'pure art' which was created purely for impression or in accordance with the demand of being experienced aesthetically. The main objectives of the creation of all Thai crafts in the past were for

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[2] During King Vajiravudh's reign (r.1910-1925), the term '*prawattisat*' was introduced to use equally with the English term 'history' (Somkiat 1984, 93). Latterly, the term '*borannakhadi*' has been used for the English term 'archaeology'.

[3] See Panofsky, E. (1955). *Meaning in the Visual Arts.* N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 14.

a particular purpose or utility. A temple, Buddha image or mural painting, for example, were created for religious purposes. It is, however, believed that the creators of such works intended more or less aesthetically to impress the viewers, perhaps including themselves. In other words, such work was created for utility as a major purpose; being aesthetic was a minor purpose. For this reason, it is presumable that Thai crafts in the past fall in the scope of the western understanding of art as well. However, art that could be called 'pure art' made its debut in Thailand together with the coming of the west in artistic terms and especially after the establishment of Silpakorn Fine Arts University in 1943. At this time, students purposely created work for its impression or in line with the demand of being experienced aesthetically.

For reasons above, 'art' which is fundamental data for this study of art history in Thailand can be divided into two main categories:

1. The craft artefacts created before the 19th century for particular purposes, such as to be used in religious places, palaces and houses. These are what we call 'ancient ruins and artefacts'. Creators of the work in this category are called 'craftsman' (*chang*).

2. The contemporary art which was mainly created in line with the demand of being experienced aesthetically, or for the purpose of impression, including sculptures, paintings, applied arts and media. The creators of these works are called 'artists' (*silapin*).

As there are two groups creating what is called 'art' in Thailand with different objectives, the approach to study these works differs accordingly. Firstly, the

iconography and iconology are the centre of interest in the historical study of ancient ruins and artefacts, whereas the study of contemporary art puts much emphasis on the characteristic and evolution of styles. Next, to study contemporary art, it is important to study the characteristic of the work of art of each creator, while it almost has never been asked who created any ruins or artefacts. Lastly, the historical study of the ancient ruins and artefacts has very much been involved with dating, due to the attempt to portray the historical events in the particular period of creation.

1.3. The importance of the study of art history in Thailand

In the Thai context, art history and history in general have an interrelationship. In researching the origins and stories of cultures and communities whose histories are unrecorded in documentary sources - or if there are such extant, such documents are unclear or incomplete - great importance is given to artistic artefacts that remain behind in the present to solve and give meaning to various historical questions.

Consider the study of Thai history, particularly that prior to the 13th century AD., where there is no extant Thai documented material. Here, it becomes essential to use art to investigate the past. A specific example would be the study of an ivory comb, found in Chansen, located in Takhli district of Nakhorn Sawan province (Fig. 1.2. and Fig. 1.3.). The result of carbon-14 testing as well as the comparison of stylistic designs of the comb with sculpture found at Amravati, India, indicates that this ivory comb was made during 100-200 AD. The presence of this ivory comb then is used by historians to support the hypothesis for Indian contacts at this time. Furthermore, studies showed that the symbols carved on the comb represented kingship and the king's regalia. This

has brought about an assumption that the Indian system of kingship was adopted in the central region of what is now Thailand at the period in question (Piriya 1990, 180).

As for Thai history after the 13th century and especially after the 15th century, different forms of written and inscribed documents were recorded in both Thai and foreign languages such as Dutch, French and Chinese. However, it should be noted that the Thai documentary sources were still limited in quantity. The record of Van Vliet, a Dutchman who visited Ayutthaya during 1633-1641, has the following observation:

> Of antiquities of their country...etc., they [the Siamese] have few descriptions, thus that their principal descriptions consist in the laws of the country, the fundaments of their religion, the lives, deeds and praise of some dead kings..., and these descriptions were mostly committed to the care of the priests... Thus amongst the nobility, the rich or civil population, not many chronicles or historical records are known, with the exception of those which are reported verbally or related in discourses (Van Vliet cited in Piriya 1992a, 40-41).[4]

The results of the historical study of art have thus been useful in terms of supporting and making arguments regarding stories previously structured by historians.

Similarly, examples can be drawn from the study of artistic styles of Buddha images which were periodised as being in the Sukhothai period by George Coedes in his *Ancient Artefacts in the Bangkok National Museum* (*Boranwatthu nai phiphitthaphanthasathan haengchat samrap Phra Nakhon*) (1928). The study consists of a number of Buddha images found at Sukhothai, Sawankhalok, Phitsanulok and Kamphaengphet, with remarks as to characteristics such as the following (Fig. 1.4.): 'the face is long, the hair is arranged in large curl, the eyebrows are arched, the nose is aquiline, the mouth is small, the legs are folded in *samathi rap*[5] position, the end portion

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[4] See Van Vliet, Jeremias. (1910). Description of the Kingdom of Siam. Translated by L.F. van Ravenswaay. *The Journal of the Siam Society* 7(1): 99.

[5] *Samathi rap* (T) or *virasana* (S) is a seated position with legs folded, one above the other.

of the robe terminates over the abdomen, and the radiance is in the shape of a flame' (Coedes 1928, 38). According to Coedes's study, the fact that Buddha images with those characteristics were found also in *Lanna*, northern Thailand, supports the text of Ramkhamhaeng Inscription saying that the power of Sukhothai Kingdom was expanded over *Lanna*.

1.4. Problems associated with the study of art history in Thailand

It is very common that disagreements arise in the area of interpreting history and this would include art history. In Thai circles, disagreements can have an element of excitement as each scholar attempts to present what he or she believes is the 'truth'. The typical Thai view is that historical truth cannot be recognised in a way that includes opposite views at the same time. This means that if the suggestions of one side were right, the opposing views would have to be wrong. However, the view shared by many Thai people is that it is extremely difficult to judge who is right or wrong concerning what happened in the past before we were born. What we can, and should do, is to determine who has the more credible reasons. This attitude is behind current trends in the discipline of Thai art history.

For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that, in Thailand, there are two main opposing schools among art historians. This is the impression of those who study and follow the work of Thai art historians. Some have called these two schools the 'Silpakorn School' and the 'Thammasat School' (although art historians are not actually limited to these two institutions). The older school follows doctrines which have long been influenced by pioneers such as Prince Damrong Rajanubhab (1862-1943) and Coedes (1886-1969). This older set of doctrines grew and was stabilised in Silpakorn

University. The latter school, grounded in Thammasat University, regularly suggests work and positions which contradict the earlier one. This thesis will from now on refer to the first group as the Establishment School and to the latter as the Alternative School.

The Establishment School was founded by Prince Damrong, the so-call 'father of Thai history', Coedes and other royal scholars such as King Chulalongkorn (r.1868-1910), and King Vajiravudh (r.1910-1925) in the early 20th century. Since then it has been based in Silpakorn University and has taken root there. It should be noted that Silpakorn was the first place where art history as a subject of study was entrenched. Silpakorn has also been the single university in Thailand continuously producing art historians. Apart from Prince Damrong and Coedes who formulated the study of the Establishment School, examples of scholars who have contributed to this school include M.C. Subhaddhradis Diskul (son of Prince Damrong), Santi Leksukhum, Smitthi Siribhadra and M.R. Suriyawut Sukhsvasti. The periodisation of Thai art styles and most assumptions in dating ancient ruins and artefacts made by these scholars are currently recognised as accurate by many Thai scholars as well as by Thai people nationwide.

The person who founded the Alternative School is Piriya Krairiksh, a doctoral graduate from Harvard University who is currently an associate professor in the department of History, Faculty of Arts, Thammasat University. Since the late 1970s, Piriya has produced numerous studies introducing new dating for ancient Thai ruins and artefacts and new suggestions in periodising Thai art styles. Conclusions are considerably different from those of the Establishment School. For example, all of the examples of Ayutthaya architecture, which were said to be samples of *early* Ayutthaya art according to Establishment School texts such as Prince Damrong's *Monuments of the Buddha in*

Siam (*Tamnan phuttha chedi Sayam*) (1926), were concluded by Piriya to require instead a redating to the *late* Ayutthya period (Piriya 1992a and 1992b). Also he claimed that the Ramkhamhaeng inscription, which is believed to show the first invention of Thai writing of the 13th century, is actually a work of 19th century (Piriya 1989). Apart from Piriya's works, it is Supinda Chiarapiphat's MA. Thesis (1999) which was written along Alternative School lines.

Piriya's new assumptions are an attempt to introduce a more critical type of historiography which has been hindered for more than half a century by the prestige (*barami*) of those royal scholars such as King Vajiravudh and Prince Damrong. After Piriya's works were published, there emerged grueling debates. Both schools attempted to attack each others' shortcomings. Despite this, the debate has not been finalised as each side adheres to its own way and continues to produce new students following its own conceptions.

As a result of this controversy, Thai art history students are currently polarised or confused as regards the study of Thai art. Content taught to the students at Silpakorn University differs from what is taught at Thammasat. Moreover, many Thai are now wondering whether the Thai history that they learned in school is correct.

1.5. Purpose of this thesis

In view of the situation outlined above, this thesis aims to investigate critically some interrelated questions:

- What factors have made the research outcome of the two schools so extremely different?

- How has methodology used by the scholars in the two schools differed?
- What means are available to assess the degree of the reasonableness of each methodology?

A practical outcome of this study would be to contribute suggestions as to what should be maintained, and what should be modified in the study of art history in Thailand as it is currently practised. Suggestions are not limited to the research methodologies, but include concepts or objectives of researchers.

It should be also noted that the historical research of Thai 'art' mentioned in this thesis is limited to the research on the history of ancient ruins and artefacts only. It excludes the research on contemporary art which was mainly created in the demand of being experienced aesthetically.

1.6. Outline of the research

Chapter 2 briefly traces the development of historical study in Thailand since mid 19th century to the present. The chapter describes the beginning of the attempt to give new explanations to the origin of ancient ruins and artefacts, based on conceptions of reason and scientific proof. This is to identify what factors have had an impact on the study of Thai art history. Such factors include the threat of colonial countries, the idea of nationalism, the influence of the study from Westerners, and even government policies on tourism promotion.

Chapter 3 analyses the differences of methodology that the Establishment School and Alternative School have applied. This analysis will indicate why Piriya's study results

differ from those of the Establishment-School scholars. This chapter brings in the debates on the dating of Ayutthaya and Sukhothai art, as well as the accuracy of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription, as examples. The main data this thesis considers in this chapter are: Prince Damrong's *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam* (*Tamnan phuttha chedi Sayam*) (1926), Crown Prince (soon to be king) Vajiravudh's *Story of An Excursion to the Cities of King Ruang* (*Rueng thieo muang Phra Ruang*) (1908), Piriya's articles *A revised Dating of Ayudhya Architecture* (1992a and 1992b) and *A Historiography of Sukhothai Art: A Framework in Need of Revision* (1993).

Chapter 4 discusses the relevance of the concept of periodisation to the history of Thai art. This is to show how art is conceptualised results in the differences in the study of history of art. This chapter clarifies how Piriya's conceptions about art differ from those of others. This is the basis that yields different study results. The data mainly considered in this chapter are: Coedes' *Ancient Artefacts in the Bangkok National Museum* (*Boranwatthu nai phiphitthaphanthasathan haengchat samrap Phra Nakhon*) (1928), Piriya's *Art Styles in Thailand: A Selection from National Provincial Museum* (1977) and *A Chronology of Buddhist Art in Thailand* (1999).

Chapter 5 reviews and concludes with a critique of the reasons and factors that differentiate study results of the Establishment School and the Alternative School.

1.7. Methodology used in this study

This thesis is not based on primary art history fieldwork, such as giving new dates and styles to ruins or interpreting artwork itself, but on analysing the art historical researches from both the Establishment and Alternative Schools. The major

information for this thesis comes from: investigating the research works relating to the history and historiography of Thai art, including books, articles and theses; interviewing researchers and journalists; as well as my own experience as a student at Thammasat University during 1992-1995.

Chapter 2

The development of the historical study of art in Thailand

2.1. Ancient ruins and artefacts in traditional Thais' view

From memoranda and literature written in the past, we can see that attempts to explain the stories of ancient ruins and artefacts and to describe their beauty have long been traditional practices in Thailand. Examples include the written works called *tamnan* (legend), which give the history of sacred objects or worship places (Nartwipha 1981, 125). Indeed, the writing of legends made its debut before the 17th century (Wyatt 1976, 110). However, the objective of writing at that time was not for education. Rather, it was aimed at glorifying the religion, and also to confirm the righteousness of the monarchy as it was required for a good king to support the religion. Also, its methodology of explaining sometimes was based on religion and miracles. For example, a part of the *Singhonnawatti Kumara Tamnan* described the origin of Phrathat Doi Tung, Mae Jun District, Chiangrai as follows:

> Maha Kassapa laid the urn of the Buddha's relic [*that* T, *dhatu* P,S] on the stone where the Lord Buddha had sat in the past. Then a miracle occurred: there were lights from the relic covering the city for seven days and seven nights, and the urn submerged into the stone as deep as 18 *soks* [cubits]. Maha Kassapa then prayed with the worship flag (*tung*) for the relic on his right side. When the flag was unfurled, its height was around 8000 wa, and its width was 500 *was* [equal to 4 cubits]. From that time on, people called that place Doi Tung (Manit 1973, 41).

Another kind of literature concerning the ancient ruins and artefacts is the travel record. Examples of this kind of writing include the many travel poems (*nirat*) written by Sunthon Phu (1768-1855), a prominent poet in the early Rattanakosin period. Sunthon

Phu described the beauty of ancient ruins and artefacts which he had viewed. The objective of this kind of writing was sometimes to honour or commemorate the kings who had it built.

Based on this kind of literature, it may be concluded that the Thai people in the past did not perceive the significance of ancient ruins and artefacts primarily as artistic items that reflected prosperity and civilisation. Most of the ruins and artefacts were religious, which in the Thai past were only supposed to be object of worship.

In the section concerning criminals in the *Law of Three Seals* (*Kotmai tra sam duang*), it is said that:

> Those who are **sinful** bandits, stealing the golden, copper alloy, silver, glass, bronze, copper or tin Buddha image...Let them be executed to redeem [them] from their **sin**. (Kotmai tra sam duang Lem 3, 1963, 243). [emphasis added]

Pathomroek Katethat (1995, 5) has pointed out that such a law was obviously aimed to protect the status of religion rather than protecting ancient ruins or artefacts.

2.2. Six stages of the development of historical study of art in Thailand

The most important turning point in the historical study and the historiography of ancient ruins in Thailand started during the latter part of King Nangklao's reign (r.1824-1851). At that time there emerged an attempt to search and explain the story of ancient artefacts by Prince (soon to be king) Mongkut who was in the monkhood at the time.

The historical accounts produced were the outcome of particular political, economic, and social conditions of particular times. To understand how the historical study of

ancient ruins and artefacts became important and how it developed, this chapter will analyse those political and social conditions as well as broader cultural considerations, which shaped the study and historiography from its beginning to the present. In approaching this analysis, I divide such development into six stages as follows:

-The first stage of development: the modern-era turning point
(approximately 1831-1868)

-The second stage of development: the era of building the absolutist state
(approximately 1868-1910)

-The third stage of development: the formulation of the study by Prince Damrong
(approximately 1910-1932)

-The fourth stage of development: the consolidation of Western influences
(approximately 1932-1955)

-The fifth stage of development: the Establishment School takes root at Silpakorn University (approximately 1955-1977)

-The sixth stage of development: the emergence of Alternative School
(approximately 1977 to the present)

2.2.1. The first stage of development: the modern-era turning point (approximately 1831-1868)

It was during the reign of King Nangklao to the end of King Mongkut's reign (r.1851-1868) when a new perception of history emerged among Thai elites. They tried to give new explanations to the historical events, including ancient ruins and artefacts.

A central question arises: How did the new perception of Thai history take place? Generally, the change of such perception emanated from two basic factors: external factors and internal factors. External factors are those often cited as reasons for any kind of change occurring to Siam at the time: an adoption of world perception from the West. This is because it was at this time that Siam saw increased interaction with the West in terms of trade and diplomacy. Also, there were numerous missionaries from the West coming to propagate religions in many Asian countries, including Siam. For this reason, the Siamese readily adopted new expertise from the West. However, it is important to note that such adoption did not take place throughout Siam. Rather, it was limited to a certain group of people who had the opportunity to interact directly with the westerners, such as the ruling elite.

New concepts and perceptions from the West intrigued Prince Mongkut who was in the monkhood for twenty-seven years before becoming king of Siam. Why did King Mongkut become interested in Western concepts and perceptions during his monkhood? The period of twenty-seven years in the monkhood was long enough to enable him to research many areas in which he was interested. Apart from Pali, Sanskrit and the language of neighbouring countries, he studied Western languages: English and Latin as well as history and administration of many countries in the West (Moffat 1961, 14-15, 21). He also read English-language books and newspapers (ibid., 21). For this reason, he was able to know important events in the various regions in the world. These included the many investigations of ancient ruins such as the grand excavation in Egypt jointly carried out by the governments of Italy and France in 1828, and the Western discovery of Angkor Wat in 1850 (Pathomroek 1995, 7). Also, importantly, given that Europe had passed the Enlightenment era, the creationism theory which relied on the Bible to explain things was challenged and surrendered to a new dimension of education

which based itself on the scientific method. Similarly, King Mongkut refrained from using religions beliefs, as well as miracles, to explain the origin of ancient ruins and artefacts and applied the scientific method in their study.

An internal factor was suggested by Atthachak Sattayanurak (1998). According to this view, new experience emanating from increasingly businesslike international trade included planning on trade and production. This developed a type of rationalism which was based on experience among the people concerned (Atthachak 1998, 11-12). This new experience then led to readiness at certain levels within Thai society to adopt new intellectual conceptions. There were some Thais at this time who came to believe in human potentiality. This belief in human potentiality in turn led to a new model of historical perception where humans could control the direction of history. Accordingly, this brought about need for a replacement of the old style of story explanation in the past and resulted in the quest for a new style.

The study of the history of ancient ruins and artefacts in Thailand seemed to have begun when Prince Mongkut went to the Phrapathom Chedi in Nakhon Pathom province in 1831 and had the *chedi*[1] excavated, as written in a book *Rueng Phrapathom Chedi*:

> After digging for 2-3 soks, the stones at the size of one sok length, 12 inches width, and 6 inches height laying as foundation were found. It then was assumed that the stones were parts of a former *chedi* which had collapsed. Then, some people levelled off the stones before using them as base of the new round-shaped *chedi* like ones in Lanka. Given that the *chedi*'s spire tended to collapse later, the *chedi* was as a result renovated again (Thipakorawong cited in Pathomroek 1995, 4).[2]

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[1] *Chedi* (T) is derived from Pali word *cetiya* which means commemorative monument of the Buddha (Piriya 1977, 222).

[2] See Thiphakorawong, Chao Phraya. (1918). *Rueng Phra Pathom Chedi* (*The Story of Phra Pathom Chedi*). Phra Nakhon: Rongphim Sammit, 2-3.

As this report indicates, Prince Mongkut made a trip to Phrapathom Chedi neither for holiday nor for paying tribute. Rather, he went to investigate what the Prapathom Chedi was, as well as its story.

Furthermore, by 1849, two years before King Mongkut ascended to the throne, Thai perceptions of the temples were no longer limited to places for worship or ritual, but had expanded to be tokens of pride for their cities: sites which people could observe, boast about, and study. This is evident from the king's announcement on the temple's restricted area which was enacted in that year. The main objective of this announcement was to mandate local people to help prevent the temples in their vicinity from being broken into by those who wanted to steal the valuables from the temples. It should be noted that this law applied to both the temples in which monks lived, and unoccupied ones, as it was said that 'although it [the temple] is dilapidated, it is something that lends grace to the city' (Chomklao Chaoyuhua cited in Pathomroek 1995, 5).[3] However, it is necessary to understand that such a change of perception at this time was limited to a certain group of people: the elite in the royal court and temples.

Furthermore, King Mongkut also had ancient artefacts gathered in one hall as a museum within the Grand Palace, then named that hall Phrathinang Prapat Phiphitthaphan. In fact, this museum could be regarded as the first museum in Siam. However, it was the king's private museum and not open to the public (Nikhom 1967, 28). This might account for another attitude which indicates that during the late 19th century interest in ancient ruins and artefacts was limited to a group of elite people. Moreover, during the

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[3] See Chomklao Chaoyuhua, Phrabat Somdet Phra. (1985). *Prachum prakat ratchakan thi 4 lem 1* (The King Rama IV's announcements vol.4). 2nd edn. Bangkok: Ongkankha khong Khurusapha, 71-72.

late part of King Mongkut's reign, the printing technique was introduced to Siam from the West. This was when knowledge in many areas diffused through the royal court.

The new concepts regarding the study and explanation of the history of ancient ruins is clearly seen from the King Mongkut's literature, handwritings, and sayings. He was the first Thai person who attempted to explain the story of ancient artefacts on the basis of scientific proof. For example, he denied the belief that the artefacts were made by angels (*thewadas* T, *devas* S, P). As he suggested: 'when people in the old days tell the story about the origin of cities or the important Buddha images, they tended to say that those cities or images were created by the god Indra.' He commented that such belief was an 'exaggeration' (Chomklao Chaoyuhua cited in Atthachak 1998, 48-49).[4]

King Mongkut himself assessed the dating of artefacts on a scientific basis. An example can be seen from his letter written to his brother, Somdet Phra Pinklao in 1859, saying:

> I went to the old city [Ayutthaya] and had a chance to pay respect to [the Buddha image called] Phra Saeng of Chiang Taeng town, the identification of which was very old. I noted that it was exactly identical to Phra Saeng of Mahachai town. ...but when I examined the golden colour on both Buddha images carefully, it appears that Phra Saeng of Chiang Taeng was older. Because the golden colour on its head and face looks like the colour of copper which is similar to the old goddess Umavati image in the temple... (Chomklao Chaoyuhua 1963, 140-142).

The king's determination to base explanations on scientific principles is obviously evidenced here by the grounding of his suggestion in the colour of the images.

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[4] See Chomklao Chaoyuhua, Phrabat Somdet Phra. (n.d.). 'Phraphut Butsayarat' ('The Butsayarat Image'). In *Chumnum phraboromma rachathibai nai Phrabat somdet phra Chomklao Chaoyuhua muad boransathan lae boranwatthu* (The Collection of King Monkut's Description: Ancient Ruins and Artefacts), a cremation volume for Phanna Chanodob. Bangkok: Rongphim Veeratham, 37.

In conclusion, in the nineteenth century a new model of historical perception was generated along with an attempt to explain the stories of the past scientifically. This included the history of ancient ruins and artefacts. One may say that the 'study' of the history of ancient ruins made its debut in Thailand in the reign of King Nangklao by Prince Mongkut.

2.2.2. The second stage of development: the era of building the absolutist state (approximately 1868-1910)

This stage of the development was partly a result of the new imperialism. The coming of the West during the 19th century led to the belief that Siameseness was 'barbarian' (Nithi 1986, 109). Ancient artefacts and ruins were one of many things used to show that Siam had a glorious past of prosperous civilisation and culture.

In 1874, King Chulalongkorn had a museum established at Concordia Hall (Phrathinang Sahathai Samakhom at present), which was called 'museum' (in Thai) at that time (Dhanit, 1967, 32). The museum was located in the palace, and was first opened on the king's birthday, where a feast would be provided for all ambassadors. Conceivably, the establishment of this museum might have had the objective of promoting, to colonial powers, an image of culturedness, in order to counteract claims that Siamese were uncivilised barbarians.

Furthermore, King Chulalongkorn made a royal announcement persuading government officials to send artefacts or any extraordinary and rare things in their possession to exhibit in the museum. The owners of extraordinary, but well-produced objects would be given awards by the king (Fine Arts Department 1989, 30-31). Notably, the

collection among the Siamese at the time was not based on aesthetic enjoyment, as the collected objects comprised those which were 'extraordinary and rare'. Moreover, antiques in the Thai understanding at that time were not appreciated for their beauty, but for showing civilisation or social prestige, as had happened in the West. As it was said, 'Patrons want to have the best or the latest (often, sadly enough, equated with the best) in order to acquire or retain social status' (Hartt 1993, 13). Here, it is obvious that the collection of ancient objects at this period took on a social value and as such it was dilettante, not antiquarian (Pathomroek 1995, 10). This phenomenon began to take place among the ruling class in the royal court.

In 1887, the museum was relocated to Bowara Sathan Mongkhon Hall. Then the Department of Museums was founded in 1889. When the Ministry of Education was established three years later, the museum came under the supervision of this ministry which had Prince Damrong as the Minister. Prince Damrong played a key role in the study of Thai history, so much so that he was subsequently recognised as the 'Father of Thai History'. In 1898, the museum was opened for all people twice a week (Fine Arts Department 1989, 36). It is important to note that the museum's display at the time was not limited to art and antiques. Rather, it included geological resources, ethnological objects, and rare objects. Also significantly, the museum catalogue was first made in both Thai and English in this period (Nikhom 1967, 29).

Apart from the museum many 'societies' were found. In 1904, the Siam Society under Royal Patronage was established 'with the objective of promoting and encouraging the arts and science in Siam and the neighbouring countries' (Siam Society 1989, 9). Also, Crown Prince Vajiravudh founded the Thawi Panya Association located in Saranrom Hall in the Grand Palace and issued a journal from 1906 explaining antique objects in

Siam. In 1908, the Antiquarian Association (*Borannakhadi Samosorn*) was established with the objective of investigating *borannakhadi* in Thailand, which meant stories of the old days of Siam (Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua 1983, 3, 94-95).

This evidences that historical study was in the centre of attention at the time. To show the colonial countries that Siam was a civilised country with a long glorious history and to build up the absolutist state, a large number of historical works were published. Although ancient ruins and artefacts could indicate the prosperity of the past, nonetheless written works on the history of ancient ruins and artefacts were produced less than those dealing with the history of 'nation'. This may partly be due to the fact that investigating ancient ruins and artefacts needed a lot of time and fieldwork. It was then quite difficult to have much of such work done under the circumstances then current: the king and his royal family were busy with political matters, both colonialism and the administrative reforms of 1892.

For this reason, Prince Damrong, who was also the Minister of Interior, had the administration of ancient ruins transferred to the Ministry of Interior. A provincial governor had the duty of overseeing archaeological sites and ancient ruins located in his jurisdiction (Damrong Rajanubhab 1973, 11-4). Accordingly, literature concerning ancient ruins during this period was in the form of official reports made by the minister, government officials, and travel reports, as well as reports by provincial inspectors. These also included written work of Westerners, many of whom conducted surveys of ancient ruins in Siam, and explained the objects displayed in the museum. It was not until 1915 that Prince Damrong had an opportunity to make more of a contribution to the study of ancient ruins as he was no longer the Minister of Interior.

The book *Story of An Excursion to the Cities of King Ruang* (*Rueng thieo muang Phra Ruang*) of Crown Prince Vajiravudh may be considered a prominent work of this period; however, it is rather a travel report by an amateur archaeologist than a document based on thorough research. The methodology of study and determination of ancient ruins and artefacts was not technically sophisticated. For example, he used his own subjective criterion based on workmanship for dating ruins (Piriya 1993, 17). This is because he believed or tried to make the audiences believe that work made by their ancestors in the old days was better than that of their generation. Consequently, he dated all poor quality ruins and artefacts later than the good quality ones.

This situation was actually a result of the Crown Prince's attempt to introduce the idea of nationalism to Thai people. It was 'to make Thais feel that Thailand is neither a new nor barbarian country, which is called 'uncivilised' in English; rather, it has prospered considerably' (Mongkutklao Chaoyuhua 1983, iii[5]). He also stated that 'whoever reads this book may feel, or be able to guess about how the quality of craft or perseverance of people in the reign of Phra Ruang was higher than that of people today' (ibid.).

This work of Crown Prince Vajiravudh became a framework for most scholars to study the history of Sukhothai art, in spite of the fact that the Crown Prince made the following disclaimer:

> It is not my intention to have this book become a textbook. My aim is to set up a framework so that those who are knowledgeable and enjoy archaeological research can make a better picture of it. Hence, even if there are readers who have different opinions from my own, I shall not be disappointed. On the contrary, if anyone who does not agree with me on any point, can clarify it for me, I shall be delighted and be thankful to him. Also

[5] For convenience, henceforth I use Roman i, ii, iii, etc. to translate Thai ก, ข, ค, etc., as they occur in the introductions of Thai-language sources.

> I would feel that I had learnt more (*Somdet Phra Boromma Orasathirat Chaofa Maha Vajiravudh Mongkut Ratchakuman* cited in Piriya 1993, 10).[6]

In summary, although various associations or clubs were founded to support the historical research, that relating to ancient ruins and artefacts languished due to a number of reasons. These included urgent political problems of colonial countries in the territory on the borders of Thailand, and the fact that the country was in the era of administrative reform which kept the ruling elites very busy. For these reasons, the development of the historical research in ancient ruins and artefacts, which was generally limited to the ruling class, was mostly insignificant in this period. Also the research methodology did not have much technical sophistication.

2.2.3. The third stage of development: the formation of the study by Prince Damrong (approximately 1910-1932)

This stage saw interest in historical research in ancient ruins and artefacts increase dramatically. This is evident in many incidents. Firstly, the campaign for rehabilitation of Thai craft and workmanship was undertaken seriously in this period. This took place because King Vajiravudh suggested that the prosperity of craft could demonstrate the national civilisation (Piriya 1987b, 38).

At that time, organisations such as the National Library Board (*Khana kammakan hophrasamut samrup Phra Nakhon*) were established to be directly responsible for works related to ancient ruins and artefacts (Fine Arts Department 1989, 36). The Fine

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[6] See Somdet Phra Boromma Orasathirat Chaofa Maha Vajiravudh Mongkut Ratchakuman (1908) *Rueng thieo muang Phra Ruang.* (*Story of an Excursion to the Cities of King Ruang*). Bangkok: Rongphim Bamrungnukunkit, 2-3.

Arts Department was also first founded in 1911, with the main responsibility of restoration works for ancient ruins. However, the Fine Arts Department was later moved under the Royal Academy (*Ratcha banditaya sapha*) which was founded in 1926 by King Prachatipok (r.1925-1935) and had Prince Damrong as director. This organisation was classified into three divisions: the *Silpakorn* division was responsible for the promotion of craft techniques; the Literature division was for the promotion of reading material; and the Archaeological division for the promotion of knowledge on ancient issues (Damrong Rajanubhab 1930, 4). Moreover, the Bangkok National Museum was established in this year (1926), for the collection of ancient artefacts (*boranwatthu*) and art objects (*silpawatthu*).[7]

Besides this, there were announcements and laws concerning ancient ruins, artefacts and art objects. In 1923, the Announcement of Investigation and Preservation of the Ancient Objects was enacted. This is the first law relating to the preservation of ancient ruins and artefacts in Thailand (Fine Arts Department 1989, 37). In 1926, the Removal of National Treasures Overseas Act was issued. Permission was required from the Royal Academy to take ancient artefacts or art objects overseas (ibid., 38).

Lastly, Prince Damrong retired from the post of Minister of Interior in 1915 and after that became the director of the National Library and of the Royal Academy. He then could spend his time freely working on historical research.

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[7] What are *boranwattu* and *silpawatthu*? George Coedes (1928, Foreword in an unidentified page) defined *boranwatthu* as 'objects which are useful for archaeological study', and *silpawatthu* as 'objects which were crafts in Ayuddhaya and Rattakosin periods'. According to the Royal Academy, those considered 'ancient' (*khong boran*) must be at least 100 years old. Furthermore, the ancient objects qualified for being collected must be important objects both in the history, and in terms of artistic model and crafting skill. Ancient objects were classified into 2 main categories: ancient ruins (*boransathan*); and ancient artefacts (*boranwatthu*). *Boransathan* included immovable objects such as temples, palaces, ancient ruins, while *boranwatthu* included movable ancient objects such as Buddha statues, utilities, and ornaments. (Damrong Rajanubhab 1930, 9)

Perhaps the most important work by Thai scholars which influenced the study of ancient ruins and art history in Thailand for many decades was *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam* (*Tamnan phuttha chedi Sayam*), which was authored by Prince Damrong, and published in 1926. This book focussed on the story of Buddhism and Buddhist monuments in various countries, including Siam. Prince Damrong grouped Buddhist monuments in Siam into seven periods (*samai*) based on the similarity of their styles i.e. Dvaravati, Srivijaya, Lopburi, Chiang Saen, Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and Ratanakosin (Damrong Rajanubhab 1960, 92). This book also highlights the transition of Thai historical study. Prince Damrong wrote this book in the form of a traditional Thai chronicle, explaining the development of the monuments (*chedi*) from the Lord Buddha's time to the time when he was writing. This book, at the same time, shows the new focus of research: to group the artistic styles of the Buddhist monuments by historical periods as mentioned above. We return to this issue in Chapter 4.

Upon the inauguration of the Bangkok National Museum, George Coedes, who was the Secretary to the Royal Academy at the time, wrote *Ancient Artefacts in the Bangkok National Museum* (*Boranwatthu nai phiphitthaphanthasathan haengchat samrub Phra Nakhon*) which was published in 1928. He made further improvements in Prince Damrong's *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam* (*Tamnan phuttha chedi Sayam*) by adding the U-Thong period. Coedes' classification was as follows: Dvaravati period; Srivijaya period, Lopburi period, Chiang Saen period, Sukhothai period, U-Thong period, and Ayutthaya period (Coedes 1928, 29-40).

It was not only ancient ruins and artefacts that were periodised, but also Thai literature and historical events. The fact that Prince Damrong and other royal scholars were

educated by teachers from the West makes it likely that they were influenced by Western conceptions of periodisation. The idea of cultural evolutionism had become widely accepted in Europe by that time. This was typically based on periods of kingdoms, dynasties and capital cities, and was designed to show the continuation and progress of the history of nation states and national cultures. The Thai version of this periodising attempt was made to confirm to the West that the Siamese were not barbarians. In addition, it served to build up the pride of the Thais, following the idea of nationalism introduced by King Vajiravudh.

The historical works on ancient ruins and artefacts of this period were mainly published by Prince Damrong and Coedes. From that time onwards, Prince Damrong's and Coedes' works became a framework for other scholars to do further study, even though it was not the authors' intention.

Prince Damrong typically began his works with a message like the following:

> ...In the following compilation, therefore, there is much that is conjecture on my part; and as conjecture may lead to error, the reader should use his own powers of discrimination when reading it (Damrong Rajanubhab cited in Piriya 1992a, 37).[8]

Also, Coedes might not intend to set a rigid framework for other scholars to follow, as he said:

> When setting display for the objects in the Bangkok National Museum, it was necessary to group those ancient objects into each period. But grouping those objects into each period is difficult and may lead to some mistakes (Coedes 1928, 29).

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[8] See Damrong Rajanubhab, Somdet Krom Phraya. (1973). 'Rueng sang phra chedi banchu phra atthi nai Wat Phra Sri Sanphet' ('The story of building the *chedi* for enshrining the ashes at Wat Phra Sri

Prince Damrong was called by Coedes and many intellectuals 'one who has never said wrong' (Suphot 1984, 34). Moreover, it is said that some scholars would place Prince Damrong's picture on their desk. When they were working and facing some problems, they would beg the Prince with clasped hands over their head for the Prince to help. Then they might finally find how to solve the problem (ibid.).

In the traditional Thai way of learning, critical conflict is hardly seen. Obedience is seen as one of the best characteristics of a good student. The Ministry of Education legislates that every school in Thailand has a ritual called '*wai khru*'[9] (pay reverence to the teacher) to show respect and gratitude to the teacher. In the ritual, one of the most important things the students are required to bring to '*wai khru*' is scutch grass. The distinguishing characteristic of scutch grass is its endurance. Although it can be stamped and flattened, it will always be resilient. This reminds student to endure. Even when reprimanded by a teacher, students have to be patient with respect (Department of General Education 1985, 49). Consequently, in this educational system, it is almost impossible for students to openly object to what the teacher says or does. Also, in Thai culture, it is very important to give respect to the older persons. There is a Thai proverb 'follow the elder and the dog will not bite' (*deun tam phuyai ma mai kat*). It is then one of the distinguishing Thai characteristics to refer to the words of the elders to support an act or saying.

Sanphet') in *Phraratcha Phongsawadan chabab Phraratcha Hatthalekha* (*The Royal Chronicle, the Royal Autograph version*). Bangkok: Samnakphim Klang Witthaya, vol. 1, 488.

[9] In original, the '*khru*' in the ritual '*wai khru*' is not a teacher or instructor as it is understood in the present. '*Khru*' in the ritual is a principle of the knowledge which is abstract. The teacher then became a representative of the principle of knowledge in the ritual. However, when it is conceived that '*khru*' in the ritual is a teacher, the student in the present day seems to be required to 'worship' (*sakkara*) the teacher (Nithi 1985, 22-25).

Moreover, the study of ancient ruins and artefacts in Thailand has proceeded under other related circumstances. Due to the fact that the pioneer researchers were kings and ruling elites in the royal court, to reject what they said is then exceedingly difficult in spite of the disclaimers given by the researchers quoted above. That the scholars after this time may not have been influenced greatly by the disclaimers can be due to cultural influences to respect the monarchy.

Receiving the instruction from the royal scholars then would mean that the receivers would not only accept without question, but also would receive with respect. An example can be seen from Luang Vichit Wathakan's speech, issued when he was posted as a Director-General of Fine Art Department:

> Museum work has been managed by Prince Damrong. He is the one who established it as well as made it incredibly large. The library work was set up by Prince Damrong and Prince Bhidhyalongkorn. And the fine arts work which includes architecture, sculpture and painting - Prince Narissaranuvattivongse has constructed it. I will continue their work with the respect of three of them. I will not let those works decline. The plan and policy they contsructed, I will continue and enlarge, and not erase or change it (Chalieo 1977, 49).

To summarise, this period saw important developments in the study of ancient ruins and artefacts in Thailand. The interest in such a study soared exponentially. This may have resulted from many factors: the attempt of King Vajiravudh to bring Siam toward ideas of nationalism which made the Siamese proud and keen to learn the history of ancient ruins and artefacts, also to preserve them. Besides, Prince Damrong was no longer Interior Minister, and as a result had time to fully contribute to this area of study. Both Prince Damrong and George Coedes strove to formulate the historical study of ancient ruins and artefacts. However, the revolution in 1932 forced Prince Damrong to move to Penang before the historical study of ancient ruins and artefacts was completely systematised. Most importantly, this is when the Establishment School was formed.

2.2.4. The fourth stage of development: the consolidation of Western influences (approximately 1932-1955)

One year after the revolution in 1932, the Fine Arts Department was again established and the School of Art was also founded under the supervision of the Fine Arts Department (Somchai 1983, 44-45). In 1943, the School of Art was upgraded to Silpakorn University (ibid., 46). At the time, the university had only one faculty: the Faculty of Painting and Sculptural Arts and had Corrado Feroci (Silp Bhirasri), an Italian, as the Dean. However, it should be noted that archaeology and art history subjects were also included in the curriculum at the time. While the study of Thai ancient ruins and artefacts was included in archaeology subjects, art history subjects provided the history of Western art as well as of art in other cultures, deemed important in the world (Piriya 1987b, 77).

Pathomroek (1995, 17) indicated that during this period Thai scholars directly adopted ideas on a formalised system of education from the West. Although many western scholars had studied the history of ancient ruins and artefacts in Thailand prior to that period, Thai scholars did not learn directly from them; but instead, from Prince Damrong. After Prince Damrong moved to Penang, however, Thai scholars studied directly from Westerners and the books written by Westerners.

Luang Boribal Buriphan was a good example of scholars of this period for he attempted to systematise the study of archaeology by importing the discipline from the West. For instance, in the book *The Story of Pre-History* (*Rueng kon prawattisat*) published in 1934 by Prince Damrong, he included the natural products, such as fossil or dinosaurs,

in the study, whereas Luang Boribal said in his book *The Explanation of the Archaeology* (*Nithet haeng wicha Borannakhadi*) that what is not a man-made product would not be included in the study (ibid.). In this book, Luang Boribal also pointed out what the researcher in archaeology would need to know. This included the methodology of making deductions from the surroundings, characteristics of craft work of people in various periods, the reading of inscriptions, cultures of various races, as well as the methodology of excavation, repair, preservation, publishing work and museum management (Piriya 1987b, 82-3).

Nevertheless, there were not so many historical studies of ancient ruins and artefacts produced during this time span due to the policy of Field Marshal Plaek Phibusongkhram's government (1940-1949) which supported creating contemporary arts rather than studying the history of ancient ruins and artefacts (ibid., 94). The majority of people who studied the history of ruins and artefacts were foreigners such as Reginald Le May, Pierre Dupont and U. Guehler.

It should be noted that although Thai scholars in this period adopted the concepts and methodologies of study from the West, they did not uproot what Prince Damrong had set up. The research methodology changed, but the body of knowledge Prince Damrong founded was still seen as reliable. During his time at Penang, Prince Damrong constantly sent letters to Luang Boribal in Bangkok with suggestions about the study of ruins and artefacts in Thailand (Boribal 1988).

To sum up, this stage saw more direct Western influence in the historical study of ancient ruins and artefacts in Thailand. At Silpakorn University, where the Establishment School grew up, Feroci established the curriculum in accordance with

Western concepts, while Luang Boribal also set up the discipline of archaeological research by following Western methodology. The king did not play a key role in the historical study of ancient ruins and artefacts any more. Also, it seemed like the three subjects, history, archaeology and art history, which used to be studied as one subject, had already been separated during this time. The historical study of ancient ruins and artefacts, which in the present day belongs in the subject of art history, was at that time still under the subject of archaeology. Besides, creating contemporary art seemed to be more popular than studying ancient art.

2.2.5. The fifth stage of development: the Establishment School takes root at Silpakorn University (approximately 1955-1977)

Interest in the history of ancient times rose to the centre of attention again in this period. This can be seen from the fact that 2,356 temples were restored during 1951-1956 alone (Thak 1978, 717). In 1959, the government of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat (1959-1963) perceived the significance of the tourism industry in terms of economic development, and then established the Thailand Tourism Organisation (Meyer 1988, 59). As Sarit said, 'the tourism industry can have a very significant part in making known to the world our tradition, culture and the virtue of Thai people' (Sarit cited in ibid., 67). Therefore, one may say that promotion of the tourism industry helped stimulate interest in the study of Thai art and culture, as well as the study of the history of ancient ruins and artefacts in Thailand.

The Fine Arts Department also made a lot of progress. Examples include the establishment of several regional museums, organisations of exhibitions to disseminate Thai art, the display of Thai art overseas, issuance of *Silpakorn Journal* to disseminate

knowledge in various kinds of history, literature, and art to the public; and the organisation of historical seminars. Furthermore, the Fine Arts Department also received international cooperation in surveying and excavating ancient ruins. For instance, the French government, through the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) sent an expert to render advice regarding the restoration of Prasat Hin Phimai (Thida 1995, 63).

Most importantly, in 1955 the Faculty of Archaeology was founded in Silpakorn University in the same year that M.C. Subhaddhradis Diskul, Prince Damrong's son, came back from studying archaeology in France. This is when the Establishment School took firm root at Silpakorn University. Subhaddradis adopted the style of archaeological study from France to teach at Silpakorn University's Faculty of Archaeology (Subhaddradis 1997, 18). He introduced the new approach to the study of the history of ancient ruins and artefacts, i.e. the analysis of the evolution of style. In this way, he published a book named *Bronze Images of Divinities of Sukhothai Period* (*Thewarup Samrit Samai Sukhothai*) in 1966. This book seems to be Subhaddradis' only original research. His other publications were mostly translation works or compilations from research results of others. It should be also noted that though Subhaddradis introduced a new and more systematic approach to study the history of ancient ruins and artefacts in Thailand to Thai students, he has never changed the old framework formulated by his father, Prince Damrong, or by Coedes.

Michael Wright, amateur historian, pointed out that:

> On the one hand, Subhaddradis knew a lot; on the other hand, he was so conservative that it was impossible to do anything creative. Conservative in the sense that he does not want to change anything [from what his father said]. It is because his father [Prince Damrong] was so great, I do not think

> the son [Subhaddradis] could ever do anything new or think anything new (Interview, Bangkok, 2 May 2000).

In 1968, the Faculty of Archaeology was divided into 4 divisions: Archaeology of the Historical Period, Prehistorical Archaeology, Oriental Languages, and Western Languages. Notably, Archaeology of the Historical Period consisted of the historical study of ancient ruins in Thailand. However, 'art history' which was available in the division of historical-period archaeology still mainly focused on the art historical study of the world's important cultures, not the ancient ruins and artefacts in Thailand (Piriya 1987b, 150).

Later, Silpakorn University's Faculty of Archaeology established its Art History Department in 1974. It is necessary to note that the subject art history in this period not only focused on the study of western art and important world culture, but encompassed the study of ancient ruins history in Thailand and its neighbouring countries.

Analysing the curriculum, Piriya (1987b, 205-206) concluded that the teaching of art history at Silpakorn University did not emphasise research methodology. Rather, the teaching was conducted by collecting existing material and lecturing to students so that the students would be able to remember and re-lecture. In this view, the establishment of the art history department did not help produce researchers.

In conclusion, a number of written works on the history of ancient ruins and artefacts were published in this period due to the many factors: the promotion of tourism, the satisfactory accomplishment of the Fine Arts Department and cooperation with foreign organisations. Most importantly, it was the time when the authority of the Establishment School was secured by Subhaddradis.

2.2.6. The sixth stage of development: the emergence of the Alternative School (approximately 1977- the present)

In this period, the Fine Arts Department generally continued to develop its work from the previous period. Examples include the establishment of museums outside of Bangkok, the organisation of exhibitions disseminating Thai culture domestically and internationally, and the survey, excavation and restoration of ancient ruins. Apart from government agencies, the private sector began to participate in the dissemination of information on Thailand's history of ancient ruins. For example, *Muang Boran Journal* has published since 1975, and *Silpa Watthanatham* (*Art and Culture*) magazine made its debut in 1979.

Furthermore, several occasions provided opportunities for Thailand to disseminate knowledge on Thai art and culture to the world community in this period. Examples include the celebrations for King Bhumibol's sixtieth birthday in 1987, a year which the Thai government also announced as Visiting Thailand Year; ceremonies for the King Bhumibol, the longest reigning monarch in Thai history were held in 1988. Besides, the historic towns of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya were included as cultural properties in the World Heritage list in 1991. All these matters substantially quickened the restoration of the ancient ruins as well as motivated the publishing of works relating to their history.

Importantly, however, ancient ruins restorations conducted by the Fine Arts Department were heavily criticised as unjustified and a distortion of the archaeological and historical evidence. For example, a stupa at Wat Kaew in Chainat was renovated by means of total cement cover. This blocked the masonry technique of the stupa construction,

which was very useful for study (Na Paknam 1987, 45). How could this happen? Many scholars suggested that the restoration had been conducted in a hurry for fear that the ancient ruins would be broken if any delay occurred (Phiset 1983, 184), or to enhance tourism (Information Centre of Muang Boran Journal 1992, 90).

Not until 1977 did the study of ancient ruins and artefacts see any significant change. That was when Piriya, who was at that time the curator of the Arts of Asia section of the Australian National Gallery, Canberra, presented a paper for an exhibition entitled *Art Styles in Thailand: A Selection from National Provincial Museums.* Piriya's paper suggested a new concept in classification of the styles of art in Thailand. He tried to periodise the art styles based on ethnic factors instead of the name of historical period formulated by Prince Damrong and Coedes. This seemed to be the moment when the Alternative School started to cohere.

In 1979, Piriya became a lecturer in the department of art history, Silpakorn University. A few years later, however, he moved to Thammasat University. He continued making the circle of art historians as well as historians and archaeologists more dynamic. In 1986, Piriya said in his article entitled 'The Art of Miracle Land' (Sukhothai Art during B.E. 1750-1900)' (Silpa Haeng Dan Neramit (Silpa Sukhothai Rawang po.so. 1750-1900)) in *Muang Boran Journal* that he thought the Ramkhamhaeng inscription, which most art historians used to date the so-called Sukhothai period art, might not have been inscribed in King Ramkhamhaeng's reign (Piriya 1986, 28-29). Later, in 1989, he presented this idea in the conference held by the Siam Society, claiming that it was probably King Mongkut who had this inscription inscribed (Siam Society 1990, 34).

Based on the above assumption, Piriya then doubted the accuracy of the existing body of knowledge relating to the historical study of ancient ruins and artefacts. In 1992 he published two articles: 'A Revised Dating of Ayudhya Architecture' and 'A revised Dating of Ayudhya Architecture II' in the *Journal of the Siam Society*. These articles tried to prove that the methodology Prince Damrong applied in the historical study of Ayutthaya architecture and the result of the study were wrong. At the same time he also suggested a new dating of the Ayutthaya architecture (Piriya 1992a, 37). Subsequently, in 1993, he issued an article titled 'A Historiography of Sukhothai Art: A Framework in Need of Revision' in the *Journal of Siam Society* which indicated that the existing historical study of ancient ruins and artefacts at Sukhothai and its perimeter is incorrect as it is 'based on a framework built on preconceptions and the suppositions of correlation between anonymous monuments and a spurious inscription' (Piriya 1993, 34). Apparently, the one who built the framework Piriya mentioned was the King Vajiravudh. It should be noted that Piriya justified his revised dating system by referring to the disclaimers of those pioneer researchers quoted above.

Finally, as he was confident that the methodology used in periodising and dating the art in Thailand proposed by pioneer scholars such as King Vajiravudh, Prince Damrong and Coedes was mistaken, he thus suggested the uprooting of the existing framework. He posed a new one which was presented in a paper entitled *A Chronology of Buddhist Art in Thailand* (1999).

Unfortunately, art history in Thammasat University is taught in only a minor way. There are only two subjects relating to the history of ancient ruins and artefacts in Thailand: 'Art History and Archaeology in Thailand' and 'Thai History for Tourism'. Though 'Art History and Archaeology in Thailand' is compulsory, it seems very

difficult for Piriya to produce a new generation of researchers in Thammasat University under this condition. Notably, he will be retired in 2002.

Most of the arguments Piriya raised were widely objected to. This may due to Piriya's research methodologies and results which are not really reliable. Or it may be partly because his new suggestions affect too many things such as tourism, the prestige of royal scholars and the stability of the Chakri dynasty.

Subhaddradis stated that:

> Historians these days are concerned mainly with truth. If it is the truth then it should be spread in its entirety. ...These days we are sure that the democratic system of government with the king at the head is the best for Thailand. In going and disturbing things from King Rama I or from other kings, do they think at all that it might effect the Chakri Dynasty of today? ...When we work we have to be responsible for the stability of the nation. You cannot just write whatever you want to write without thinking how the country will take it, especially teachers (cited in Suphot 1984, 36-38).

However, it should be noted that it is not only Piriya whose researches object to the existing body of knowledge. For example, Srisak Wanliphodom, an archaeologist from Silpakorn University, also suggested that Sukhothai is not the first capital city of Thailand. However, no one has produced as many relevant works as Piriya has done.

Other prominent art historians in Thai art from the Establishment School of this time are Santi Leksukhum, Smitthi Siribhadra, and M.R. Suriyawut Sukhsvasti who are now lecturers in the department of Art History at Silpakorn University. Interestingly, those three scholars got their BA from Silpakorn University and their last degree in Europe, whereas Piriya grew up in Europe and got all his degrees from the United States. This is a possible reason that Piriya has developed his process of thinking freely and far away from Thai political and social conditions to produce remarkably different suggestions.

Smitthi suggested that Piriya's characteristic of attempting to find his own originality is an outcome of the American educational system. According to this account, Piriya has always introduced what is new and exciting and later has deleted his own ideas (Smitthi, Interview, Bangkok, 29 April 2000).

Indeed, the historical writing in Thailand has come to a turning point again since the late 50's. People became the centre of the study because it was believed that the king-centred study did not reflect the real picture of the Thai society. Many ideas which challenge the prestige of royal institutions and the ruling class, such as those of Sulak Sivarak or Jit Phumisak, were widely published. This atmosphere may be another factor giving chances for Piriya to introduce his new ideas.

The historical study of ancient ruins and artefacts during this stage has seemed to be lively. Most of Piriya's works sought to annul almost the entire existing body of knowledge in Thai art history. Most of the arguments Piriya raised have been widely debated but still no conclusions have become accepted as a general consensus.

2.3 Conclusion: How has the political and cultural context made the two schools different?

In the past, ancient ruins and artefacts in the view of Thais were something to worship as they were created for religious reasons. It was not until the late 19th century that ancient ruins and artefacts had become 'something that lends grace to the city'. Finally, when the Western system of education was introduced to Thailand in the early 20th century, ancient ruins and artefacts were also regarded as evidence to use in

investigating the history of the nation. At the present time, all of these ideas from both the past and the present remain in Thai people's perceptions of ancient ruins and artefacts. For example, if someone sees a Buddha image beside the road, they may show respect. However, once that image is brought into a historical park or museum, it becomes an object of study or something that shows the prosperity and civilisation of the past.

The idea that ancient ruins and artefacts are 'something that lend grace to the city' or 'show the prosperity and civilisation of the past' existed in various times as a result of different reasons. This included protecting Thailand from the threat of the West during the reign of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn and building up nationalism during the reign of King Vajiravudh and the Phibunsongkhram government. A further factor more recently has been the promotion of tourism.

In its early stages of development, the social organisations which supported historical research on ancient ruins and artefacts as well as those which published research work were clubs and societies. After 1932, universities became another organisation which played this role. The Fine Arts Department also continues improving its work in the dissemination of information on Thailand's history of ancient ruins. However, the restoration done by the Fine Arts Department often yields more problems than benefits. Cooperation with foreign organisations has also led to an increase in excavations. Later, in the 1970s many magazines relating to the historical study of ancient ruins and artefacts were published by the private sector for scholars to publish their work.

Research methodology became more systematic in each stage of development. However, the assumptions those pioneer researchers proposed fifty years ago have

almost never been changed or questioned by many scholars. This may be due to the fact that the prestige of royal scholars is respected more than the truth. Besides, there are also cultural factors of the educational system in Thailand which do not encourage students to express their own creativity. Moreover, the historiography of Thai art was constructed for a particular purpose, i.e. the creation of a feeling of national unity and cultural pride. New suggestions which are unfavourable to this purpose are then hardly acceptable. The Establishment School which has been developed under the circumstances mentioned above is thus rather conservative, whereas Piriya who grew up abroad is quite revolutionary.

Chapter 3

The methodology of the historical study of art in Thailand

In this chapter I analyse the methodology of art history study which helps clarify why the results of Piriya's research differ from those of Prince Damrong, King Vajiravudh and other scholars. By way of illustrative examples, the chapter will consider a number of debates relating to so-called Ayutthaya and Sukhothai art, as well as the related Ramkhamhaeng Controversy.

3.1. The dating of Thai art as problematic

For the purposes of this chapter, the 'methodology' of the historical study of art in Thailand mainly refers to approaches to establishing or evaluating the dating of ancient ruins and artefacts. As mentioned in chapter 1, art history, including archaeology and history, are subjects which centrally recognise the significance of 'time'. Hence, especially in the Thai case, dating has long played a key role in the study of art history in one way or another. Thai scholarship, whether of the Establishment or Alternative Schools, has also tended to hold the view that the knowledge gained from establishing dates and sequences can allow us to understand social behaviour of humans at the time the works of art were produced.

It is constantly argued in Piriya's works that one of the major problems of the historical study on Thai art is the misconception in its basic methodology, such as basing the dating of ancient ruins and artefacts on documentary sources without considering artistic styles or using subjective criteria to evaluate the date of ancient ruins and artefacts. Importantly, Piriya's study results cannot be taken as merely different

opinions in matters of detail. Rather, they strongly argue against all the existing doctrines in terms of method as well as particular conclusions. We turn to specific examples in the following subsections.

3.2. The dating of Ayutthaya architecture

3.2.1. Traditional Ayutthian periodisation and dating

The dating of Ayutthaya art was first discussed in 1926 when Prince Damrong published his *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam* (*Tamnan phuttha chedi Sayam*). In that book, when he described Ayutthaya art, he divided the art in the category of an 'Ayutthaya period' into 4 sub-periods as follows:[1]

The first sub-period: from 1350, the beginning of the reign of King U-Thong, finishing by 1488, the end of the reign of King Borommatrailokkanat. Most of the monuments in this period were said to be built in the form of the Lopburi-period *prang*.[2] The examples of such monuments are *prangs* at Wat Phutthaisawan (Fig. 3.1.), Wat Mahathat (Fig. 3.2.), Wat Ratchaburana (Fig. 3.3.), and Wat Phra Ram (Fig. 3.4.).

The second sub-period: from 1463 when King Borommatrailokkanat moved the capital to Phitsanulok to the end of King Song Tham's reign [1628]. During this period, instead of *prangs*, Sinhalese-style stupas became more popular. Examples

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[1] Summarised from Damrong Rajanubhab (1960) *Tamnan phraphuttha chedi* (*Monuments of the Buddha in Siam*). 3rd edn. Cremation volume of the Prince Patriarch Krommaluang Vajirayannawong. Phra Nakhon: Hang hunsuan chamkat Sivaphorn, 118-126.

[2] *Prang* (T) is a tall, tower-like structure whose form is derived from the Khmer sanctuary tower (Piriya 1977, 225).

of such monuments are the three great stupas at Wat Phra Sri Sanphet (Fig. 3.5.) and the *chedi* commemorating the victory of King Naresuan [r.1590-1605] in an elephant duel with the Crown Prince of Hamsavati (Fig. 3.6.).

The third sub-period: from the beginning of King Prasat Thong's reign in 1630 to the end of King Thai Sa's reign [1732]. As a result of King Prasat Thong's reconquest of Cambodia, the Khmer style of *prang* was revived during this period. The examples of such monuments are the *prangs* at Wat Chai Watthanaram (Fig. 3.7.), the *chedis* at Wat Chumphon Nikayaram (Fig. 3.8.) and the Prasat Nakhon Luang (Fig. 3.9.). All were built during the reign of King Prasat Thong.

The fourth sub-period: from [1732] when King Borommakot ascended the throne to the fall of Ayutthaya [1767]. There seem to be fewer monuments built during this period. Wat Kudi Dao (Fig. 3.10.), built by King Borommakot, was one such item. King Borommakot preferred to restore rather to build the monuments. Prince Damrong stressed that the restorations were done keeping with the original style. Only the stucco decorative motifs were changed.

Prince Damrong also gave datings for those monuments. He began his study by researching historical records, which consisted of the royal chronicles (*Phraratcha phongsawadan*). The information from the royal chronicles enabled him to identify the temples, and in particular, the kings who built them, before dating the art styles.

For example, given that the *Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, Phanchanthanumat (choem) version* contains a statement that King Borommatrilokkanat (r.1448-1488) had Wat Phra Ram built (Phraratcha phongsawadan Krungsri Ayutthaya 1964, 13), Prince Damrong

then concluded that the main *prang* at Wat Phra Ram exemplified the first period of Ayutthaya architecture (1350-1488) (Damrong Rajanubhab 1960, 119).

It is necessary to note that the classification of Ayutthaya arts into 4 periods and the dating of Ayutthaya architecture suggested by Prince Damrong discussed above are still widely accepted at present. M.C. Subhaddradis Diskul's *Art in Thailand* (*Silpa nai Prathet Thai*) serves as a good example. It was published for the eleventh time in 1996.

Alongside Prince Damrong, Tri Amattayakul also divided Ayutthaya arts into 3 periods: the early sub-period; the middle sub-period; and the late sub-period. Tri combined Prince Damrong's sub-periods 3 and 4 because sub-period 4 is extremely short and lacks a new model of monuments (Tri 1967, 44). However, it is apparent that the arts determined as representative of each period do not change from what was specified by Prince Damrong.

3.2.2. Piriya's new suggestions

Piriya's articles published in 1992 included: 'A Revised Dating of Ayutthaya Architecture' and 'A Revised Dating of Ayutthaya Architecture (II)'. In these papers he aimed to 'propose a new dating for Ayutthaya architecture which, it is hoped, will replace the existing chronology formulated by Prince Damrong in his *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam* (*Tamnan phuttha chedi Sayam*) (Piriya 1992a, 37). Piriya concluded that '...Wat Phra Ram, Wat Ratchaburana, Wat Mahathat and Wat Phutthaisawan [which Prince Damrong dated between 1350-1488] all assumed their present forms in the 18th century...' (Piriya 1992a, 49). He also concludes that '...none of the examples

chosen [by Prince Damrong] to represent Ayutthaya architecture of the second sub-period (1463-1628) was built at the time assigned to it' (Piriya 1992b, 23).

3.2.3. The Wat Phra Ram Controversy

To establish the methodological differences between the two schools, it is useful to examine how each school has treated Wat Phra Ram, an important Ayutthian site. Piriya (1992a, 37) forcefully argues that Prince Damrong's methodology can by no means apply to the precise study of ancient ruins history. He reasons that the ancient ruins in Thailand, most of which are religious places, are from time to time restored. Such restoration usually changes the architectural form. The ancient ruins that remain today are in fact the results of the last restoration, while their original forms are largely unknown. If Wat Phra Ram, for example, really existed as suggested in the royal chronicles, we are not able to specify its character. For this reason, it is not accurate to conclude that the main *prang* at Wat Phra Ram exemplified the first period of Ayutthaya architecture by simply referring to the historical records.

In this matter it is of interest to consider Pinphet Satrawaha's MA thesis entitled *The Study of the Early Ayutthaya Prang in Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya* (*Kansueksa phra prang nai samai Ayutthaya torn ton thi changwat Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya*) submitted to Silpakorn University in 1991. The author advocates that the architectural form of Wat Phra Ram as we see it today was a result of restoration by King Borommakot in late Ayutthaya in 1741 (Pinphet 1991, 101). Like other scholars in the Establishment School, Pinphet nevertheless uses Wat Phra Ram to exemplify the architectural form of early Ayutthaya.

At the other end of the spectrum, in Piriya's study of Wat Phra Ram, he began with the study of the Ayutthaya map drawn by a Dutchman in 1650 (Fig. 3.11.) and the map drawn by Vingboons in 1665 (Fig. 3.12.). In these maps, there appeared a picture of a slim *prang*, flanked by two smaller *chedis* in the West and the East, and *wihan*[3] in the South on the spot where Wat Phra Ram is located at present (Fig. 3.13. and 3.14.). Piriya was then convinced that Wat Phra Ram really existed at the time, and had the same characteristics as appeared in the maps. However, there was also a record called *Voyage to Siam*, written by Pére Tachard who had visited and described all the buildings at Wat Phra Ram thoroughly in 1685. When one draws pictures in accordance with Tachard's description (Fig 3.15. and 3.16.), they are totally different from those in the two earlier maps. Hence, Piriya suggested that Wat Phra Ram as Tachard described it must have been built during 1665-1685, which was in the reign of King Narai (r. 1656-1688) (Piriya 1992a, 49).

However, the architectural form of Wat Phra Ram that Tachard described also differs from its present form (Fig. 3.17. and 3.18.). According to the *Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*, Wat Phra Ram was reconstructed at the command of King Borommakot (r.1732-1758). Piriya then concluded that the Wat Phra Ram we see today should be considered a result of the reconstruction during the reign of King Borommakot (Piriya 1992a, 49). Therefore, based on Piriya's arguments, Wat Phra Ram should be classified as the art of *late* Ayutthaya, in the reign of King Borommakot, and not as an example of the art of *early* Ayutthaya as suggested by researchers in the Establishment School.

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[3] *Wihan* (T) or *vihara* (P, S) is a hall which the religious service are held (Fickle 1974, 62).

What do we learn from the above discussion? Prince Damrong must have believed that the architecture he studied had been built at the same time as the temples were originally established. He believed further that the architectural character of the ancient ruins did not change, or if so, it would have changed only slightly (Piriya 1992a, 37). Clearly, however, to study art history, one must bear in mind that ancient ruins are restored from time to time, perhaps substantially. As a result, Prince Damrong's methodology of merely basing the dating of ancient ruins on evidence from documentary sources alone is considered by the Alternative School to be naive.

3.2.4. The Wat Phra Sri San Phet Controversy

Since traditional Thai culture did not always place importance on details of recording, how evidence is interpreted becomes a factor indicating the reliability of a given study. Furthermore, the system of storing of documents was unsatisfactory, leaving only limited and incomplete evidence. Such incompleteness of the evidence has become an opening causing arguments among many researchers. Pieces of evidence for Thai art history seldom provide explanations in a direct way. The researchers must interpret for themselves. To illustrate this, we consider the dating of the three great stupas at Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

Prince Damrong maintained the three great stupas at Wat Phra Sri Sanphet are an example of architecture in the second Ayutthaya sub-period (1463-1628), or, as some academics call it, the middle sub-period.

Prince Damrong explained that:

> In the reign of King Borommatrailokkanat and King Intharacha (Borommarachathirat III)[4] [r.1488-1491] the three great stupas had not yet been built...King Ramathibodi II [1491-1529] had the stupas built for enshrinement of the ashes of those two kings. These stupas are certainly the three great stupas at Wat Phra Sri Sanphet and nowhere else. The first two were built in that reign. In the later period the third stupa was built for enshrining the ashes of King Ramathibodi II. Three stupas can thus be found there to this day. (Phraratcha Phongsawadan chabab phraratchahatthalekha 1968, 285)

On the other hand, Piriya has stated a position conflicting with the above belief, as his own research has shown that the architectural form of the three great stupas at Wat Phra Sri Sanphet was more likely to be built in the late Ayutthaya period during the reign of King Borommakot. Piriya (1992b, 11) cites the *Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*,[5] which states that in 1479 King Ramathibodi II had the *wihan* at Wat Phra Sri Sanphet built. The *Luang Prasoet version*[6] states that King Ramathibodi II had the ashes of King Borommatrailokkanat and King Borommaracha III enshrined in the great stupa in 1492 (ibid.). Piriya emphasised that there is no evidence that speaks of the three stupas for enshrining kings' ashes at Wat Phra Sri Sanphet (ibid., 13).

Concerning the three stupas enshrining the ashes of the kings, Piriya (ibid.) concludes that Prince Damrong, in the *Royal Autograph version* (1968, 285), brought it from the *Luang Prasoet version* which states that King Ramathibodi II had the great stupa(s) built for enshrining the ashes of King Borommatrailokkanat and King Borommaracha III in 1492. This is in spite of the fact that this version of the royal chronicles does not give any location, description, or number for the stupas. This is a case of an over

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[4] Sometimes referred to as King Borommaracha III.
[5] See Phongsawadan chabab Phanchanthanumat (Choem) in *Prachum phongsawadan Pt.64 Vol. 38-39*. Bangkok, Sucksaphanphanit, 1969, Vol. 38, 12.

interpretation of the evidence. Nevertheless, since Prince Damrong had interpreted such, proponents of the Establishment School have held to this explanation as the final word in dating the three great stupas at Wat Phra Sri Sanphet. The three great stupas have thus become widely held examples of Ayutthaya architecture of the second sub-period or the middle sub-period to this day, as can be seen in Subhaddradis' *Art in Thailand* (*Silpa nai Prathet Thai*) (1996, 34), Samat Supyen's *The Ayutthaya Architecture* (*Sathapatthayakam samai Ayutthaya*) (1971, 5), Sa-nguan Rodbun's *Thai Art* (*Silpakam Thai*) (1986, 131) and Santi's *Silpa Ayutthaya: Ayutthaya Art: the royal craft of the land* (*Nganchang Luang khong Phandin*) (1999, 47).

Piriya (1992b, 13) further states that the oil painting of IUDEA (1659) (Fig. 3.19.) and Vingboons' atlas (1665) (Fig. 3.20.) do not show the three great stupas behind the *wihan* in the place of Wat Phra Sri Sanphet. He thus does not agree with the conclusion of Prince Damrong that states that King Ramathibodi II had the first two stupas built in 1492 and the third was built in 1529.

Piriya also mentioned the '*Plan of the Royal Palace of Siam*' (Fig. 3.21.) drawn by Dr. Engelbert Kaempfer, who visited Ayutthaya in 1690, showing that the front of the *wihan* at Wat Phra Sri Sanphet has a small structure and a *chedi* (Fig. 3.22.). Behind the *wihan* there are three large buildings separated by two multi-storeyed *prasat* type *chedis* (not a bell-shaped Sinhalese type as the present-day ones) and one *prang*. As the buildings that appear in Kaempfer's 1690 plan do not appear in Vingboons' atlas of 1665, Piriya concludes that these structures were probably built between the years 1665-1690 in the period of the reign of King Narai (r.1656-1988) (ibid.).

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[6] See O. Frankfurter. [1909] (1954) Events in Ayudhya from Chulasakaraj 686-966. Reprinted in *The Siam Society Fiftieth Anniversary Commemorative Publication: Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal Volume I, 1904-29*. Bangkok, the Siam Society, 51.

When the built structures of Wat Phra Sri Sanphet as we see them today (Fig. 3.23.) are considered, it can be seen that there are many differences from the Kaempfer's plan. Piriya (ibid.) thus hypothesised that all the structures that appear in the Kaempfer's plan were demolished and built into three Sinhalese-type stupas separated by the *mondop*,[7] which were used to enshrine the Buddha's footprints in the reign of King Borommakot. This hypothesis is based on *Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version* of the Ayutthaya chronicle which contains the assertion that this *wat* was restored in the reign of King Borommakot, and on the *Royal Autograph version* that states that the restoration took place between 1742-1744. The three great stupas that the Establishment School offers as an example of architecture from the Ayutthaya *middle sub-period* are thus argued by Piriya to be architecture from the *late* Ayutthaya.

3.2.5. Dating the *ubosot* at Wat Boromma Phuttharam: the suggested methodology

Piriya (1992c, 2-3) argues that the correct methodology of study should begin with the study of the ancient ruins' artistic styles themselves. For example, the dating of a convocation hall for monks (*ubosot*) at Wat Boromma Phuttharam, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya (Fig. 3.23.) should begin with the style of the *ubosot* itself. After finding that the *ubosot* had huge rectangular windows, the dating could then be made in the light of reliable historical records. Here, Piriya bases his dating on the notes of Nicolas Gervaise,[8] who lived in Ayutthaya during 1683-1687. In his notes, Gervaise wrote that the Siamese learned how to make windows wider from the Europeans.

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[7] Mondop (T) or mandapa (S, P) in Thailand refers to a particular form of square building with pyramidal superstructure (Fickle 1974, 37).

Piriya then confirmed Gervaise's statement with Thai accounts, which included the *Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, the Royal Autograph version*,[9] suggesting that King Phetracha (r.1688-1702) was the person who had this temple built. After all evidence related to the ancient ruins, foreign documents, and Thai documents was placed in congruence, Piriya then recognised that the *ubosot* at Wat Boromma Phuttharam was really built in the reign of King Phetracha. Notably, this methodology is recognised by the Alternative School as a convincing application of the art historical approach.[10]

Nevertheless, Santi Leksukhum argues that Piriya himself sometimes did not apply the art historical approach but sticks to historical record to a considerable degree. He began the presented research by referring to information from historical records and paid too much attention to it rather than considering the art styles as he initially suggested he would do (Santi 1993, 120-1).

3.2.6. Different approaches within the Establishment School in the study of Ayutthaya art

It is necessary to note here that this thesis does not argue that all other researchers in the Establishment School use the same approach as Prince Damrong. Nor is it argued that

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[8] Gervaise, Nicolas, *The Natural and Political History of the Kingdom of Siam*, translated by John Villers, Bangkok, White Lotus, 1989, 167.

[9] *Phraratcha phongsawadan chabab Phraratchahattalekha lem 2* (The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, the Royal autograph version vol. 2), 7th edition, Bangkok, Khlangwitthaya, 1973, 140.

[10] According to Piriya (1987b) there are three main approaches scholars applied to the study of art history in Thailand: historical approach, archaeological approach and art historical approach. The historical approach is mainly based on documentary sources. The documentary sources will be used in evaluating the dating of ancient ruins and artefacts. This approach is often applied solely without the consideration of the art styles. The distinguishing characteristic of archaeological approach is the technique of excavation. It also includes the use of scientific tools such as Radiocarbon, Thermoluminescence and Archaeomagnetism in dating ancient artefacts. The art historical approach is to analyse the artistic style and interpret the iconography. There are two methods to analyse the artistic style: to compare the artistic style of the ruins or artefacts studied to that of the ruins and artefacts of other corresponding cultures which have known as to exact date, and to study of the evolution of motifs. In a case of religious art, iconography will indicate to what belief the art belongs.

they do not know how to use the art historical approach in their study. Indeed, there are many research works showing that the researchers did use the art historical approach in their studies. For instance, Santi Leksukhum proposed this in his research work entitled *The Evolution of the Stucco Motif Decorative in the Early Ayutthaya* (*Wiwatthanakan khong chanpradap luadlai samai Ayutthaya torn ton*) in 1979. His research methodology was an attempt to determine the sequence of the stucco motifs, before dating the motifs of the ancient ruins mentioned in reliable records: which motif emerged first, which later. He then weaved together pieces of evidence, relating to the age of unknown items, into an evolutionary sequence to determine the dating.

Also, examples showing the use of the art historical approach can be seen from Smitthi Siribhadra's *The Evolution of Prang* (*Wiwatthanakan Phra Prang*) (1970), Srichada Munintho's *The Architecture in the Early Ayutthaya Period* (*Sathapatthayakam samai Ayutthaya torn ton*) (1978), and Phinphet Satrawaha's *The Study of Phra Prang in The Early Ayutthaya Period in Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya* (*Kansueksa phra prang samai Ayutthaya torn ton nai changwat Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya*) (1991).[11]

However, researchers in the Establishment School considered as 'given' the dating of ancient ruins held to exemplify several periods of Ayutthaya architecture, as in Prince Damrong's *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam* (*Tamnan phuttha chedi Sayam*). They did not use the art historical approach to study these for possible redating. In other words, such methodology is usually used for the dating of the ancient ruins not mentioned in the royal chronicles, or not used as samples of Ayutthaya architecture in each period in Prince Damrong's *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam* (*Tamnan phuttha chedi Sayam*).

This can be seen from Smitthi's work (1970, 46) as he suggests that we know only a few *prang* with certain evidence of construction, such as the main *prang* at Wat Phra Ram, Wat Phutthai Sawan, Wat Ratchaburana, Wat Mahathat, Wat Chai Watthanaram. For other *prang* which we do not have evidence for, to ascertain their closest ages, he suggested we can always make judgements based on the *prang* whose ages we know with certainty, in terms of Prince Damrong's scheme.

Another example can be seen from Srichada's research (1978, 17). She points out that we are able to conclude that some temples were built in the early Ayutthaya period in light of the royal chronicles which mentioned the building of temples in this period. Also, she said the evidence found in these royal chronicles enables us to study the architecture of early Ayutthaya by means of examining the temples themselves.

3.3. Approaches to the evaluation of written sources used in dating Ayutthaya art

Here, it is clear that researchers in the Establishment School relied heavily on the Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya while Piriya based his arguments on a variety of evidence, including the royal chronicles, contemporary records, and maps drawn by foreigners. However, it seems that Piriya depends on the latter two pieces of evidence more than the royal chronicles.

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[11] Those three works are dissertations submitted to Silpakorn University.

3.3.1. Thai chronicle sources

Given that the royal chronicles rewritten in the early Rattanakosin were compiled by royal order, most of their subject matter was concerning kings as the centre of power. Royal orders were used as a means of showing the rights and power of kings, and at the same time as material to train people in the ruling classes on administration. Evidence also shows that the authors of these royal chronicles drew the data from archival materials of government such as the royal astrologer's record, law and the chronicles which had been written before (Nartwipha 1981, 307-8).

However, the data used in writing the royal chronicles might not be able to provide entirely correct historical facts or create accurate historical images due to many reasons. These include the fact that the writing was conducted under royal sponsorship. As a result, the authors spontaneously had considerable bias in favour of their sponsors, perhaps choosing to note only the facts that could help promote positive and grand images of the royal families. This gave the royal chronicles a characteristic of holding pre-selected facts. Furthermore, most royal chronicles emanated from copying, compiling, and rewriting, which could make the data subject to much diversion from the original. Such diversions can be seen from the years stated. For example, while the *Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, Luang Prasoet version* suggested that the *wihan* of Wat Phra Sri San Phet in Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya was built in 1499 (Phraratcha phongsawadan krung kao chabab Luang Prasoet Aksoranit 1972, 452), the *Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version* concluded that it was built in 1479 (Phraratcha phongsawadan Krung Sri Ayutthaya 1964, 17). For this reason, the use of the royal chronicles to support any argument must be made carefully. Contemporary documents must also be simultaneously examined.

3.3.2. Prisoners' Testimonies

Another type of Thai account used in dating Ayutthaya period architecture is the testimony of Ayutthaya people captured by the Burmese in 1767 including *Statement of Ex-king Uthumphorn* (*Khamhaikan Khun Luang Hawat*) and *Statement of the residents of the old capital* (*Khamhaikan Chao Krung Kao*). It is necessary to note that the originals of these two books were in Burmese, and errors could have occurred upon their translation into Thai. Furthermore, Somkiat Wanthana (1984, 5) points out that '....stated year and context were so vague and confusing that we must keep in mind that they could by no means be interpreted as the true stories'.

3.3.3. On the use of foreign evidence

As for the foreign accounts used for dating Ayutthaya architecture, they could be classified into two types: written records, and the illustrations in 17th-18th century paintings, maps and charts. This evidence was written by foreigners who came to live in Ayutthaya for many different reasons, ranging from trading to disseminating religion.

There is reason to believe that Piriya contemplates the use of foreign evidence because it has more contemporary character than other kinds of evidence. Moreover, there is no Thai account extant showing the illustration of any particular monastery (*wat*) in the Ayutthaya period.

Yet Piriya does not entirely discount the value of the royal chronicles. He still uses the royal chronicles to support his arguments for the incidents which took place in the late

Ayutthaya period. This could be because most old royal chronicles were compiled in the early Rattanakosin period, a time when people may have known much about what had happened in late Ayutthaya. For example, Piriya indicated belief in the accuracy of the *Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version* which suggested that Wat Phra Ram was reconstructed during the reign of King Borommakot, before concluding that the Wat Phra Ram exemplifies late Ayutthaya architecture (Piriya 1992a, 49). However, he prefers to rely on foreign evidence for accounts related to early Ayutthaya.

Foreign evidence has some drawbacks, details of which are discussed below:

3.3.1.1. Problems in transcriptions of Thai sounds

As for the written record type of foreign evidence, the authors obtained data and information by means of asking Siamese people. For instance, Van Vliet explained that he developed his writing from investigating an old royal chronicle (Van Vliet 1980, 9), as well as asking many Siamese, especially knowledgeable monks (ibid., 12). Hence, this chapter suggests we consider the possibility of misunderstanding resulting from communications in different languages.

3.3.3.2. Foreigners' visual accounts

With regard to the records in which the authors described the things they saw, such as Tachard's description of Wat Phra Ram, this thesis suggests that this kind of evidence is very useful. The reason is that such authors wrote about the things they really saw. We should be confident that the things mentioned in the descriptions really existed, although the styles of those things might be slightly incorrect due to the lack of understanding of the forms of Thai architecture.

As regards the illustration type of foreign evidence, we must be very careful in its application if the evidence is in map form drawn by foreigners. While it can be used to confirm the existence or position of the temples, it should not be used to specify the styles of the temples due to the following reasons. First, the drawers were foreigners who drew the maps with foreigners' understandings. The objective of the drawing was to make a general memorandum, not the study of art styles. For example, the drawers would not distinguish between a Sinhalese-style stupa and Khmer *prang* (Wright 1995, 53).

Against this backdrop, perhaps we should be hesitant to believe what Piriya (1992a, 47) has suggested regarding Wat Ratchaburana at Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya, that in 1665 it had no main *prang* as it does at present, but that it had a main *chedi* as appears in Vingboons' map. Still, we might accept, to some extent, the accuracy of the drawings which contain details of ancient ruins, such as Dr. Engelbert Kaempfer's illustration of the *chedi* Phukhao Thong at Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya (Fig. 3.25.). Yet Santi (1993, 121) points out that the drawing of *Chedi* Phukhao Thong made by a Westerner was incorrect in terms of proportion, as it looks only slightly similar to Wat Phukhao Thong as we see it today.

3.3.3.3. Maps drawn by foreigners

As a second point, foreigners' maps show the whole kingdom of Ayutthaya. The drawer would not be able to draw in much detail. What is drawn is what is held to be of interest and importance by the drawer. This does not mean that things not drawn did not exist. Alternatively, there being no *wat* in the plan does not mean that that *wat* was of insignificance; it could simply be that it did not lie in the interest of the drawer.

The final point is that most of the maps were created in Europe based on the description of people who had visited Ayutthaya and returned (Wright 1995, 53). The possibility of the information being inconsistent is quite high.

Phitthaya Bunnak, from Chiangmai University, confirms the reliability of these maps. These maps, he argues, were made to show strategic points of the Ayutthaya kingdom. The maker would thus have to pay attention to detail to some extent, for the map may be later used in an effort by their country to seize control of the Ayutthaya kingdom. Phitthaya accepts that the records or maps made by foreigners are not entirely accurate but he believes that they are the best evidence that currently exists (Interview, Bangkok, 22 May 2000).

3.4. The Dating of Sukhothai art

The study of Sukhothai art is another example in this thesis which indicates the differences of the methodology of study between the two schools we are considering. While Piriya attempts to reassess Sukhothai art, other scholars especially in the Establishment School still try to place most of the ancient ruins at Sukhothai, Kamphaengphet and Phitsanulok in the time frame of the Sukhothai period (around the mid of 13th- mid 15th century).

3.4.1. The importance of Sukhothai art and the Ramkhamhaeng inscription

It is Crown Prince Vajiravudh who made the history of Sukhothai art widely known by publishing a book entitled *Story of An Excursion to the Cities of King Ruang* (*Rueng*

thieo muang Phra Ruang) in 1908, after his visit to Kamphaengphet, Sukhothai, Sawankhalok, Uttaradit and Phitsanulok in 1907 (see Fig. 3.25.). In this book he also tried to date the existing ancient sites in those cities. The Crown Prince proposed this book 'to be a guideline for those who specialise in archaeology, to make a consideration and hypothesis on accounts relating to the cities of Sukhothai, Sawankhalok and Kamphaengphet' (Mongkutklao Chaoyuhoa 1983, i). He also hoped that the audiences of this book would be proud of their ancestors (ibid.). The Crown Prince's hope has been adhered to by other scholars, both foreigners and Thais, for almost a century. Sukhothai art, from that time onwards, has been considered 'the greatest achievements of Tai art' (Griswold 1967, 1), 'the most perfect beautiful art' (Khien 1969, 65), 'one of the finest styles' (Feroci 1948, 43) or 'the most beautiful and unique art' (Subhaddradis 1996, 26). The Ramkhamhaeng inscription (inscription no.1) (Fig. 3.26.), which is believed to be of the 13th century and the first witness to the invention of Thai writing, is generally used as evidence for those qualities of Sukhothai art. Also, this inscription is used to construct our perception of the Sukhothai kingdom, the beginning of the history of the Thai nation. We can even say that without such impressive art and the Ramkhamhaeng inscription, Sukhothai would be known as only a small, unexceptional state.

In the late 1980s, however, the accuracy of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription as well as the dating of Sukhothai arts was questioned by some scholars. For example, Michael Vickery (1987, 209) said that he is quite sure that the Ramkhamhaeng inscription is not a genuine work of the 13th century, but a later composition. Piriya (1989, 230) states that the Ramkhamhaeng inscription probably is the work of the middle 19th century. He also suggests several of the so-called Sukhothai arts, such as the Attharasa image at Wat Saphan Hin (Fig. 3.27.) and Ajana image at Wat Si Chum (Fig. 3.28.) at Sukhothai,

were created during the Ayutthaya period (Piriya 1989, 127, 139). This has become a very serious controversy. If such suggestions turn out to be true, it not only requires the history of the Thai nation to be revised, but it also affects Thai people's pride in their ancestors' greatness. Princess Galayani Vadhana, King Bhumibol's sister, said, 'It would be as if an old friend whom we have learned to trust were suddenly to become untrustworthy' (Galayani Vadhana in Chamberlain, et al, 1991, ix).

3.4.2. Piriya's critique of Vajiravudh's methodology

According to Piriya (1993), Crown Prince Vajiravudh mainly had two methodologies in the dating analysis of ancient ruins and artefacts. Firstly, he based his dating of ruins on documentary accounts such as the chronicles and inscriptions by correlating the ruins mentioned in those accounts with the ones he found. This was without considering their artistic form. Secondly, he used his own subjective criterion such as workmanship for dating ruins. Examples can be seen in the dating of the Attharasa image at Wat Saphan Hin and Ajana image at Wat Sri Chum, Sukhothai, respectively.

3.4.2.1. Dating the Attharasa image at Wat Saphan Hin

One of the examples Piriya (1993, 16) quoted to show the Crown Prince's methodology is the analysis dating the Attharasa image of Wat Saphanhin, Sukhothai (Fig. 3.27.). The Crown Prince (cited in Piriya 1993, 16) investigated the Ramkhamhaeng inscription saying that:

> To the west of this city of Sukhothai is the Arannika[12]...in the middle of the Arannika there is a large wihan, tall and beautiful, and there is an Attharasa image standing up[13]

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[12] *Arannika* is a residence of the forest-dwelling monks (Piriya 1993, 16).

[13] See Somdet Phra Boromma Orasathirat Chaofa Maha Vajiravudh Mongkut Ratchakuman (1908) *Rueng thieo muang Phra Ruang. (Story of an Excursion to the Cities of King Ruang).* Bangkok: Rongphim Bamrungnukunkit, 84.

When the Crown Prince went to the Arannika which the inscription mentioned, he found a temple called Wat Saphan Hin. There is a very high *wihan* with the standing Buddha image inside. The Crown Prince then concluded that this place must be the same as the place mentioned in the Ramkhamhaeng inscription (ibid.).

On this point, Piriya (1993, 16) criticised the Crown Prince as follows:

> In the excitement of having found the Attharasa image where the Ramkhamhaeng inscription says it would be, it could not have occurred to the Prince that the image he saw might not have been the same one mentioned in the inscription. His correlation not only confirmed that the image had existed since King Ramkhamhaeng's time, but that its existence supported the trustworthiness of the inscription

Especially due to the fact that the author of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription did not specify the name of any particular site mentioned, it is possible for misinterpretation to arise. However, when the Crown Prince said that the standing Buddha image at Wat Saphan Hin is the Attharasa image mentioned in the Ramkhamhaeng inscription, it has been believed from that time onwards that that image is an example of Sukhothai-period art.

To date the standing Buddha image at Wat Saphan Hin, Piriya firstly considered its artistic style from the picture taken before the Fine Art Department's restoration (Fig. 3.27.). He found that the artistic style of the Attharasa image at Wat Saphan Hin is more similar to that of Wat Phra Si Iriyabot in Kamphaengphet (Fig. 3.29.) which was dated during the early 16th century, as opposed to the late 13th century (Piriya 1989, 127). Furthermore, Piriya pointed out the fact that there is no word 'Attharasa' in the Sukhothai inscription no.2 of the middle 14th century. According to the Sukhothai inscription no.4, he suggested that the belief of building an Attharasa image might not have been introduced before 1361. It was at this time that King Li Thai had the Buddha

image built as 'the same height as the legendary height of Lord Buddha'.[14] He then hypothesised that the Attharasa at Wat Saphan Hin could not have existed in the late 13th century. In other words, the Attharasa at Wat Saphan Hin is not an example of Sukhothai art from the so-called golden age, Sukhothai period (around the mid 13th to mid 15th century) but rather Sukhothai art of the early 16th century.

3.4.2.2. Dating Wat Tra Phang Thonglang

To show the Crown Prince's second methodology, the best example Piriya (ibid., 17) produced is his attempt to date Wat Traphang Thonglang, Sukhothai (Fig. 3.30.). At the south side of the *mondop* of this temple, the Crown Prince found a stucco decorative relief (Fig. 3.31.) which was beautiful and in good condition. The Crown Prince (cited in Piriya 1993, 17) then said:

> This *wat* appears to be truly ancient because the workmanship has not degenerated. If it had been made in later times, it probably would have nothing worth seeing, for our contemporaries no longer seem to know what is beautiful.[15]

Piriya (1993, 17) commented that:

> Like other scholars of his time the Prince equated age with workmanship. It never occurred to him, nor to his contemporaries, that workmanship is a subjective criterion that cannot be used for dating a work of art.

Piriya (1995) also suggested that the artistic style of the stucco relief at Wat Traphang Thonglang is similar to that of the Sinhalese art work of the late 18th century. That stucco relief then should be considered an example of Sukhothai art of the late Ayutthaya period.

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[14] See also Sukhothai inscription no.4 (Wat Pa Mamuang inscription), the second side, and line 31-32 in The Office of Ministry, *Prachum Sila Jaruk Phakthi 1 (The Collection of Inscription Part1)*, Bangkok, 74-90.

After carefully considering the picture of the stucco decorative relief at Wat Traphang Thonglang taken in the 1950s (Fig. 3.31.) and comparing it to the one taken recently (Fig.3.32.), we can see how much the stucco relief has deteriorated within about 50 years. Given this rate of deterioration, it is then quite impossible that similar stucco relief could have existed for more than half a century.

3.4.3. The influence of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription in the study of Sukhothai art

3.4.3.1. The power of the inscription

There is a belief that

> As for the stories mentioned in the inscription, the historical intellectuals consider it as a reference and as the best powerful tool in analysing and making a final decision (Office of the Prime Minister 1965, i).

This thesis has already mentioned earlier that Thai students have been taught that primary sources are inevitably more reliable than secondary sources. Undoubtedly, inscriptions are considered to be primary sources, along with what has been inscribed on permanent objects such as stones, steel, or buildings. These have been regarded as 'the best powerful tool in analysing and making a final decision'.

An example of this belief can be seen in how the story of Wat Ta Ten Khung Nang at Sukhothai was built. There is an inscription called the Wat Ta Ten Khung Nang Inscription as it was found at Wat Ta Ten Khung Nang. (Fig. 3.33.) The passage in this

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[15] See Somdet Phra Boromma Orasathirat Chaofa Maha Vajiravudh Mongkut Ratchakuman (1908) *Rueng thieo muang Phra Ruang. (Story of an Excursion to the Cities of King Ruang).* Bangkok: Rongphim Bamrungnukunkit, 90.

inscription says that in 1404, King Sai Lue Thai's (or King Mahathammaracha III, around 1399-1419) mother had the Wat Sri Phichit Kiti Kanlayaram built (Santi 1997, 56). Then Wat Ta Ten Khung Nang later had its name changed to Wat Sri Phichit Kiti Kanlayaram. It was also generally assumed that this *chedi* had existed since King Sai Lue Thai's reign. Interestingly, no one has proven whether this inscription was originally there or brought from another place. As it is an 'inscription', everyone is inclined to rely on it.

3.4.3.2. The Ramkhamhaeng inscription's trustworthiness in the study of Sukhothai art

The Crown Prince (1983, 12th edition, ii) said in his *Story of An Excursion to the Cities of King Ruang* (1908) that:

> The book which can be reliable is Inscription no.1 (of the King Ramkhamhaeng), [Inscription] no.2 (of the King Kamonten Atta Sri Thammikka Rachathirat), the Inscription of Kamphaengphet, the Chronicle of the North and the Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya. Among those inscriptions, no.1 is the most essential. The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya are somewhat helpful. As for the Chronicle of the North, it is regretful to say that it is unsubstantial and almost useless.

From that time onwards, the Ramkhamhaeng inscription has been considered the most reliable piece of evidence in the history of Sukhothai as well as the Thai nation.

Prince Damrong, for example, with his trust in the accuracy in the Ramkhamhaeng inscription as well as Vajiravudh's hypothesis, believed that the Mahathat *chedi* at Wat Mahathat (Fig. 3.34.) in the centre of the city of Sukhothai has been there since the reign of King Ramkhamhaeng, although the inscription does not mention the *chedi* at all. The Ramkhamhaeng inscription only said:

> Inside the city of Sukhothai, there are *viharas*, there are golden statues of the Buddha, and Phra Attharos [Attharasa] statues; there are big statues of the Buddha and medium-sized ones, there are big viharas and medium-sized ones;

> there are senior monks—nissayamttakas, theras and mahatheras (Chulalongkorn University 1984, 41).

Prince Damrong gave a further opinion that the architectural style of the Mahathat *chedi* of Wat Mahathat at Sukhothai was popular in the Sukhothai period. He, in 1928, found the illustration of a Chinese *chedi* which had similar style. He then concluded that King Ramkhamhaeng probably adopted the Chinese *chedi* style and later made it to suit the Thai architectural system. The Sukhothai style of *chedi* was thus born (Mongkutklao Chaoyuhua 1983, 68). This is also an example of over interpretation of evidence.

It was not only the Crown Prince and Prince Damrong who relied heavily on the Ramkhamhaeng inscription, but Coedes also greatly trusted this inscription. He said, 'as for the city of Sukhothai, I will describe it by following the 'inscription' because there is an excellent guidebook, the Ramkhamhaeng inscription, portraying the city of Sukhothai in around the early 19th century of the Buddhist era (the middle of 13th century)' (Coedes cited in Subhaddradis 1986,11).[16] Coedes (cited in Piriya 1993, 25) then believed:

> Most of the monuments are identified with certainty. As for those which are not or are not mentioned in the stele, no doubt [this is] because they are later than the reign of Ramkhamhaeng...[17]

It should be noted that the above passage that Coedes stated in 1956 seems to have been believed for almost half a century. Wright (1987, 38) stated that by reading the Ramkhamhaeng inscription and the illusion (*upathan*) caused by this inscription, one then tended to pull the date of the art works at Sukhothai back to the Ramkhamhaeng

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[16] See Coedes, George. (1964). *Silpa Sukhothai lae Ratchathani Runraeg khong Thai (Sukhothai Art and the Premiere Capital of Thailand),* Translated by Subhaddradis Diskul, Bangkok: Krom Silpakorn, 57.
[17] See Coedes, George. 'Les prèmieres capitales du Siam aux XII^{e}-XIV^{e} siecles,' *Art Asiatiques*, 3(1-4), 246.

period (1279-1298). An interesting case is found in Santi's work (1997, 39). He suggested that:

> The main *chedi* of Wat Phra Sri Rattana Mahathat, Chalieng [Fig. 3.35.] is a *prang*, characteristic of Ayutthaya [style]. It was probably built in the reign of King Borommatrailokkanat, around the early 21st century [B.E.], when he won Chalieng back from the occupier, the Chiangmai military. However, there is an assumption that this *prang* was built to cover up the original Phra Sri Rattana Mahathat which King Ramkhamhaeng had built.

In the last sentence Santi refers to Subhaddradis's *Silpa Sukhothai* (n.d.) page 189. However, the name of Ramkhamhaeng is not on that page. What was said in Subhaddradis's study is:

> It is believed that the original Khmer *prang* is probably inside this large one which was constructed during the early Ayudhya period about the middle of the 15th century [B.E.] and restored again in the late period of Ayudhya about the early 18th century.

From the above example, Santi appear to be another scholar who tended to 'pull back' the date of ruins at Sukhothai to the Sukhothai period.

Wright (1983, 38) also emphasised that the hypotheses the scholars made about art in Ramkhamhaeng's time are all possible. However, he says, we do not have evidence, we have only illusion (*upathan*).

3.4.4. The influence of the royal chronicle in the study of Sukhothai art

Scholars in the Establishment School believe that Sukhothai was abandoned in 1438 because the *Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, Luang Prasoet version* said that Ayutthaya had annexed Sukhothai into the Ayutthaya kingdom in 1438 (Santi 1997, 12-13). Accordingly, they assume that the ancient ruins at Sukhothai, Kamphaengphet and Phitsanulok were built during the Sukhothai period. For example, one of the factors that helped Santi (1997, 40) date a *chedi* to the early Sukhothai period was that the

excavation showed the *chedi* was restored many times. If he had not believed that Sukhothai had been abandoned in 1438, he would have thought that the restoration might have happened at any time up until the present day. Contrarily, Piriya (ibid.) believes that Sukhothai was abandoned in 1786 when King Yod Fa (1782-1809) of the Chakri dynasty had all people moved out of Sukhothai. Piriya then concluded that all ruins existing today were built recently before the city was abandoned. Obviously, the artistic style formerly known as Sukhothai period art, for Piriya, is the unique style of the late Ayutthaya period art. In this case, Michael Wright gives a different opinion. He (1987, 37) states that the end of Sukhothai was in the reign of King Naresuan during 16th century. However, he (ibid.) said he believes that ninety percent of the architecture or works of art called 'Sukhothai style' were made in the Ayutthaya period.

3.4.5. Preconceptions in the study of Sukhothai art

The scholars of the Establishment School in later generations, Santi Leksukhum for example, also recognised the art historical methodologies in their study. He does not solely rely on documentary sources, but puts much emphasis on the art style. The study results, however, are still different from those of the Alternative school. This is because they are based on a preconception that Sukhothai art must have been created in the Sukhothai period. An example is drawn from Santi's work in 1997, *Sinlapa Sukhothai* (*Sukhothai Art*). By means of analysing art style, Santi (1997, 88) dated the stucco motif antefixes decorating the monument at Wat Sri Sawai, Sukhothai in the Sukhothai period, but not before King Li Thai's time (1347- around 1368). From the antefixes

representing the angel, *garuda*[18] holding *naga*[19] and the *naga* at the end of the decorating arch (Fig. 3.36.), he (1997, 88) stated:

> Although the influence of Khmer art can be seen in the style of the angel's garment, the overlapped apron obviously shows Sukhothai style which has appeared before. Importantly, the oval face of the angel is similar to that of the Buddha images in the main group [Fig. 3.37.].[20] Besides, at the decorative motifs of the base of some antefixes, there are scroll and floweret motifs [Fig. 3.38.] improved from the flower motif in Chinese art influences.[21] The age of the stucco workmanship of this *prasat-style chedi* then should not be earlier than the reign of King Li Thai [1347-around 1368].

By the same art historical methodology, Supinda Chiarapiphat (1999), who came from the Alternative School, gave a different conclusion for the dating of the stucco decorative motifs of the monument at Wat Sri Sawai. She (1999, 89) found that the style of the apron the stucco angel was wearing (Fig. 3.39.) was similar to that of the angel drawn on the Buddha's footprint at Wat Phrachao Ton Luang in Phayao (Fig. 3.40.), which was dated to the middle of the 17th century.[22] Also, the style of the apron of another stucco angel on the antefix at Wat Sri Sawai (Fig. 3.41) is similar to that of the stucco angel on the antefixes of the five-spired *stupa* at Wat Mahathat, Sukhothai (Fig. 3.42.) (ibid.). To date the stucco decoration at Wat Sri Sawai, she then needs to date the stucco decoration at that five-spired *stupa* as well. She correlated the style of the ornament of stucco *singhas* (lions) decoration at the base of the five-spired *stupa* (Fig. 3.43.) with that of the stucco *yaksas* (demon giants) decoration of the main prang at Wat Ratchaburana, Ayutthaya (Fig. 3.44.), which was last restored in the reign of King Borommakot (ibid.). Consequently, she (ibid., 91) dated the stucco decoration of

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[18] *garula* (P), or *garuda* (S), or *khruth* (T) means the mythical creature, a composite of man and bird (Fickle 1974,19).

[19] *Naga* is a semidivine being who is normally a serpent but can assume a human form at will, retaining a cobra's hood and a serpent's tail (Fickle 1974, 38).

[20] According to Santi (1997, 64-9) the Sukhothai Buddha images were categorised into 4 categories: the Wat Trakuan group, the Main group, the Phraphuttha Chinnarat group and the Kamphaengphet group. One of characteristics of the images in the main group is the oval face. The images in the main group were dated from around the late 14th century.

[21] He did not explain here why he mentioned Chinese art.

[22] See Sailer, Waldemar C., (n.d.). *Based Largely on the Collection of Buddha Footprints*, Bangkok, The Siam Society under Royal Patronage, 2.27.1-2.27.2.

the monument at Wat Sri Sawai during the middle of the 17th to the middle of the 18th century.

It can be seen that both Santi and Supinda applied the art historical methodologies, in term of style comparisons, in their studies. What is different is that Santi correlated the artistic style he studied with the style dated within the Sukhothai period, whereas Supinda did the same thing, but with the styles dated in Ayutthaya period. This is a case of what Piriya (1993, 34) has criticised the scholars in the Establishment School for, that is that they are:

> ...tempted to account for most of the major monuments in the Sukhothai and Sri Satchanalai Historical Parks and to place the majority of them within the time frame of the so-called 'Sukhothai period (c.1220-1438)'.

3.5. The Ramkhamhaeng Controversy

3.5.1. Background: different opinions on the accuracy of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription

It is known that the text of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription can be divided into 3 parts. The third part is generally understood to have been written in a later period as the character of the scripts is different from that of the first two parts (Suriyawut 1988, 107).

Prasert Na Nagara (cited in ibid., 106), however, believes that the second part was written in the later period as it has the phrase 'in Ramkhamhaeng's time' (*Meu Chua Pho Khun Ramkhamhaeng*) which may imply that it was referring to the past.[23]

Subhaddradis (1986, 10) suggested that both the second and third parts may have been inscribed not a very long time after Ramkhamhaeng's time as they all use the same calligraphy.

However, some scholars such as Saeng Monwitoon argue that it was not King Ramkhamhaeng who had the Ramkhamhaeng inscription inscribed, but King Mongkut (Galayani Vadhana 1989, 18).

Also Chand Chirayu Rajani indicated that the Ramkhamhaeng inscription was written in the reign of King Li Thai (1347-around 1368) (Vickery 1978, 205). The reasons he gave are that the inscription mentioned the name Ramkhamhaeng as a third person. Furthermore, King Li Thai needed this inscription for his propaganda (ibid.)

The accuracy of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription was, however, first officially questioned by Michael Vickery in 1987 in the International Conference on Thai Studies at the Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. He presented a paper entitled 'The Ram Khamhaeng Inscription: a Piltdown Skull of Southeast Asian History?'. Vickery seems to be sure that the Ramkhamhaeng inscription was written in a much later period as its scripts, vocabulary, and content differ from that of other

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[23] See Prasert Na Nagara. (n.d.). 'Khwamhen ruang jaruek Phokhun Ramkhamhaeng' in *Phonngan khonkhwa prawattisat Thai lae rueng kluae (mai) khem (The Accomplishment of the Research on Thai History and the Story of the Salt Which is (not) Salty)*, Bangkok, Rongphim Akson Samai, 84.

Sukhothai inscriptions. However, he did not specify whom he believed the supposed author to be.

3.5.2. Piriya's analysis of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription

Piriya claimed in his article 'The art of miracle land (Sukhothai art between 1207-1357)' ('Silpa haeng dan neramit (Silpa Sukhothai rawang po. so. 1750-1900)') published in 1986 that there is reason to think that the Ramkhamhaeng inscription was not written in King Ramkhamhaeng's reign and that the content of this inscription should thus not be used in the historical study of Sukhothai art (Piriya 1986, 29).

In 1989 he published a book entitled *The Ramkhamhaeng inscription: Art Historical Analysis* (*Jaruek Pho Khun Ramkhamhaeng kanwikhroh choeng prawattisat silpa*). The result of his study indicates that this inscription was written during 1833-1855 (Piriya 1989, 230). He (ibid., 225-228) found that there are three reasons to say that this inscription is problematic. Firstly, much of the vocabulary which appeared in the Ramkhamhaeng inscription was not found in other Sukhothai inscriptions. Also, its content is not relevant to the values, traditions and culture of Sukhothai as mentioned in other Sukhothai inscriptions, but they were comparable to literature composed after 1292, and often similar to the literature in the early Rattanakosin period. Secondly, the information about ancient ruins and artefacts from the Ramkhamhaeng inscription differs from that of the study of art history or archaeology. Lastly, the author of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription copied many words and phrases from other Sukhothai inscriptions.

What is most important to this thesis is the second reason Piriya gave. According to Piriya, this is the use of the art historical or archaeological study to check the accuracy of documentary sources. For example, the Ramkhamhaeng inscription says: 'around this city of Sukhothai there are triple walls.' However, the archaeological excavation indicates that in 1292 there was only a single wall around the city (ibid.).

Another example he gave is a case of the Ajana image at Wat Sri Chum. The Ramkhamhaeng inscription mentions an Ajana image which the Crown Prince believed to be an image at Wat Sri Chum (Fig. 3.28.). By the art historical approach, Piriya found that its style is similar to that of the Buddha images of the early 16th century (Fig. 3.45.), rather than to the style of the 13th century (Fig. 3.46.) (Piriya 1989, 139). This example, however, is not clear to me. There are two reasons for me to think that the image mentioned in the inscription is definitely not the one studied by Piriya for its artistic style. Firstly, as the inscription does not mention the name of a *wat*, it is possible that the image the inscription mentions is not the one at Wat Sri Chum. Secondly, although the Ajana image mentioned in the inscription might be the one at Wat Sri Chum, the style of the image would surely have been changed. Thus the study of the artistic style of the Ajana image at Wat Sri Chum cannot prove the inaccuracy of the inscription.

This thesis also argues that the last reason Piriya gave is unlikely to prove his suggestion. When he found there are some words and phrases in the Ramkhamhaeng inscription similar to that of other inscriptions or literature, how can he be sure which is a copy of which? It seems as though he already had a conclusion in his mind that the Ramkhamhaeng inscription was written in the later period. It may be acceptable if this issue is raised after his suggestion is proven to be true.

Interestingly, Wright (1997, 15-6) calls those who believe that the Ramkhamhaeng inscription is a work of the 13th century 'Angels' (*Khai Phra*), and calls those who suggested that it is a work of a later period 'Devils' (*Khai Yak*). He (ibid.) claims himself as a *yak*. This thesis agrees with Wright's conclusion that, finally, the contradiction between *Phra* and *Yak* is not really about the accuracy of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription. It is a conflict between the conservative group who wants to portray the Thai society by the old mythology and the new generation who wish to analyse Thai society with the critical method by not referring to the myths.

3.6. Conclusion: Basic differences between the two schools

According to the approach to the historical study of Ayutthaya and Sukhothai art of scholars in the Establishment School and the alternative school discussed above, it can be clearly seen that both schools have four opposite basic beliefs which yield different results.

Firstly, Piriya does not hold the assertions of Prince Damrong or King Vajiravudh as reliable; the other researchers, on the other hand, claim that Prince Damrong's or King Vajiravudh's conclusions are correct and use them as a foundation for the study of many other ancient sites.

Secondly, according to Piriya (1993, 23) the founding fathers in the Establishment School, such as Prince Damrong or King Vajiravudh, tended to believe that the artistic style of all ancient ruins and artefacts has not been changed since they were created. So they concluded that well-preserved ruins or artefacts are older than the destroyed ones.

Actually, it can be seen in Vajiravudh's *Story of An Excursion to the Cities of King Ruang* (*Rueng thieo muang Phra Ruang*) that he surely knows that the ruins were altered at various times by thieves (ibid., 25, 27). Piriya (1993, 23) shows that he is aware of the fact that the ruins and artefacts are always changing due to the climate, thieves and restorations. As a result, he does not support his hypothesis with documentary sources only. Piriya and Supinda show in their studies that they always date the ancient ruins and artefacts from the style which is a result of the last change.

However, the later generation scholars in the Establishment School tend to realise that some ruins and artefacts have changed. Santi (1997, 53), for example, noted that the *Chang Lom chedi* at Wat Sorasak (Fig. 3.47.) has been restored by the Fine Art Department. However, he is sure that the Chang Lom chedi at this *wat* was built in 1417 as the inscription called *Sila Jaruek Wat Sorasak* specified the dating as such. After carefully considering the picture of the *chedi* at Wat Sorasak taken before the restoration by the Fine Arts Department (Fig. 3.48.), no bell-shaped *chedi* appeared in the picture. How could the Fine Arts Department know the style of the *chedi*? What made Santi categorise this chedi to the Sukhothai period?

Thirdly, the methodologies differ as to their reliance on the different pieces of evidence. The Establishment School has tended to rely upon documentary sources, such as the royal chronicles and inscriptions, which have been the subject of recent academic controversy. Piriya in the Alternative School has tended to avoid such evidence and has seen the evidence of the foreigners as more reliable. Also, Piriya questions the accuracy of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription. Finally, he is sure that that inscription was not made in the 13th century, but rather in the 19th century. He has never used this inscription for supporting his studies. The conclusions thus have differed greatly.

This thesis agrees that there is a need to evaluate the accuracy of Thai accounts by checking them with other contemporary accounts such as those of foreigners or of the neighbouring countries. The royal chronicles are somewhat problematic due to their incompleteness and to the fact that there have been further additions along the line. Accounts made by the foreigners, however, also have problems as mentioned earlier.

This thesis will not judge the accuracy of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription. However, as long as there is no acceptable conclusion as to the date of the inscription, we would be inclined to support Piriya's suggestion that the Ramkhamhaeng inscription should not be used in dating analysis of ruins and artefacts.

Fourthly, the central hypothesis of both schools has led to a certain bias in their respective work, further dividing the conclusions made by each school. For example, scholars in the Establishment School preconceived that the Sukhothai period was a golden age, the centre of political, religious, art and cultural property of Siam which was evidenced by the Ramkhamhaeng inscription. The ancient ruins and artefacts found in the city of Sukhothai and its periphery have become a prototype of the so-called 'Sukhothai art style'. Undoubtedly, according to the Establishment School, the prototype would surely need to be dated in the period earlier than the copy. Piriya, however, when he tried to prove the inaccuracy of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription, hypothesised beforehand that it is a work of the later period.

Chapter 4

The relevance of the concept of periodisation to the history of Thai art

This chapter aims to clarify how the way art is conceptualised leads to differences in the study of the history of art. The chapter traces the Establishment School work of Prince Damrong, Coedes and other scholars who have seen art as evidence for the continuing prosperity of the nation. These scholars found a definitive explanation for the history of art in terms of the chronology of the kingdom arranged as a succession of royal seats of power or *Ratchathani*. By contrast, with the Alternative School, the chapter traces how for Piriya, art in Thailand has been classified in other ways. The chapter traces a shift in Piriya's thought from classification on the basis of ethnicity to art styles classified into schools based on the Buddhist sects that inspired their creation. This chapter will include an assessment of these approaches to the periodisation of Thai art styles.

4.1. The root of concept of periodisation of Thai history

4.4.1. The perceived need for periodisation

The relevance of the concept of periodisation to Thai national history as well as to Thai art has been a subject for debate among many scholars for almost half a century. As discussed in chapter 2, the formulation of periodisation for Thai history could be explained by the attempt to build up a sense of unity of the people in the nation, i.e., a common history of the 'Thai', or a 'National History'. This would be for purposes of power centralisation, mirroring the establishment of the absolutist state during the reigns of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn. This establishment brought about an attempt to explain the genesis of Thais, as well as the continuation and cohesion of their

national culture. The aim was to show how history and cultural practices accumulated over the centuries by the ancestors and transmitted in a direct fashion had resulted in prosperity at the time of writing. Such a project inspired the related attempt to establish a continuous succession of *Ratchathani* (the capital city where the king lives). This resulted in a sequence which straightforwardly linked together the periods referred to as the pre-Sukhothai, Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Thonburi, and Rattanakosin.

The periodisation of art styles in Thailand proceeded in line with this project. In particular, it was established by Coedes in accordance with the demand for nomenclature to label ancient artefacts at the new National Museum in 1928. As Coedes said, he pursued this work:

> ...in establishing these provisional classes in 1926, primarily to permit objects at the new National Museum to be classified into distinct sections (museum organisation having its regrettable demands)... (Coedes cited in Woodward 1978, 78).[1]

Each art style was named according to a different historical period: Dvaravati, Srivijaya, Lopburi, Chiang Saen, Sukhothai, U-Thong and Ayutthaya.

In 1977, Piriya indicated in his *Art Styles in Thailand* that the periodisation of Thai art based on the principle postulated by Coedes was misleading as it was a system based on political kingdoms rather than art styles. He also proposed a new classification for art styles in Thailand corresponding to ethnic factors. However, Piriya's suggestion in 1977 was rejected as it was considered to have brought on new problems and confusions. Twenty years later, in 1999, Piriya once again suggested a revolutionary

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[1] See Coedes, G. (1939). 'Reginald Le May: A Concise History of Buddhist Art'. *Journal of the Siam Society*, 31(2): 193.

new classificatory scheme for Thai art. This time he based his classification on the Buddhist sects in which such art had been created, as described below.

4.1.2. *Ratchathani* periodisation and traditional Thai historiography

Based on current written work in Thai history, it has been found that there are various forms used for periodisation. Among these, the most popular one is that in order of the reigns of kings, dynasty, and *Ratchathani*.

The periodisation based on the reigns of kings can be found in historical records in the form of legends (*Tamnan*) and royal chronicles (*Phraratcha phongsawadan*) which were the tradition of writing history prior to the 19th century. When the new model of historical study and writing emerged after the 19th century, *Ratchathani* was used as the guiding factor for the periodisation, while the reigns of the kings who ruled each *Ratchathani* were also used to distinguish sub-periods within the periodisation. Other approaches, such as periodisation based on topics of study, have just made their debut in the latter half of the 20th century.

Tamnan refers to a tradition of writing mostly religious in nature. We often find that the stories about kings, as well as incidents taking place in each reign, were integrated into *tamnans*. However, the stories were mainly limited within a Buddhism framework, i.e., kings must look after religions, build the temples etc. (Kanchanee 1989, 209).

Phraratcha phongsawadan is a more secular historical form. It features the activities showing the greatness of each king such as their fighting in wars. However, accounts of religious activities are also found. Unlike the legends, the inclusion of the religious

activities was not with an aim to serve religion. Rather, it was for showing the legitimate power of each king (ibid., 210).

The historical records in the forms of *tamnan* and *phraratcha phongsawadan*, the character of which chronicles incidents taking place in sequence during the reigns of kings, could be explained by the concept of 'praising the leader'. The reason is that the contents of *tamnan* and *phraratcha phongsawadan* were based on Buddhist concepts. For *phraratcha phongsawadan* in particular, Hindu beliefs were also incorporated. Such beliefs, which were grounded in 'the rule of *kamma*' (behave well, deserve good return; behave badly, deserve bad return), encouraged contemporary people to perceive the significance of their leaders and to praise them as having extraordinary qualifications above lay people. This is because they are held to practice a good *kamma*, thus being born to be a king who brings peace and order to the society. Furthermore, the Hindu belief that the king is the God Narai had the result of placing him in a position higher than that of the ordinary people. It thus can be understood how the king was seen to be so important that he became a centre of the story of the past.

The new perception of historical writing had *Ratchathani* as a parameter for periodisation, while the royal dynasty and reigns of the kings were used as sub-periods. In other words, *Ratchathani* was used as the focal point; dynasty and reigns of king as details. This shows the recognition of the importance of a king and the *Ratchathani* where he lived. Although the king in this era was not recognised as a god who came to get rid of human grievances, it was believed that he was the person who brought well-being to the society. For this reason, a king was therefore the centre of the story in modern historical writing still as he played a key role in directing the history.

Summing up, the use of *Ratchathani* as another parameter for periodisation derived from a concept of praising the king which was rooted in *tamnan* and *phraratcha phongsawadan* as well as associated with the political purposes discussed before.[2]

4.2. Traditional art periods in Thailand

The periodisation of Thai art was first done in 1926 when Prince Damrong published his *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam* (*Tamnan phuttha chedi Sayam*). He (1960, 92-149) classified the reminders or symbols of Buddha (*Phuttha chedi*) in Thailand into seven periods (*samai*) on the basis of style and named each period as follows:

1. Dvaravati period (beginning around 50 B.C.)
2. Srivijaya period (beginning around 750)
3. Lopburi period (beginning around 1050)
4. Chiang Saen period (beginning around 1050)
5. Sukhothai period (beginning around 1250)
6. Ayutthaya period (beginning around 1350)
7. Rattanakosin period (beginning in 1782)

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[2] It is important to note that when the period of Absolute Monarchy had ended, belief in the potential of one single person became belief in the public's power. People became the centre of historical writings on Thai society. These writings emphasised various aspects of human significance, such as languages, beliefs, customs, way of life, and attitudes. This kind of history is therefore classified in various periods according to the field of study. For example, those who study economic history such as Chatthip Nartsupa have periodised Thai history into a Feudualism period; Feudalism and Capitalism period, and State Capitalism period on the basis of the mode of production (Kanchanee 1989, 228).

At present, however, if we read the books on Thailand's general history, particularly those produced by the Ministry of Education for primary and secondary students, we will find that the reign of the kings, monarchy or *Ratchathani* still remain as the mainstay for the historical periodisation.

Two years later, George Coedes published *Art Artefacts in Bangkok National Museum* (*Boranwatthu nai phiphitthaphanthasathan haengchat samrup Phra Nakhon*). In this piece of work, Coedes divided the antiques displayed in the museum into several periods like those that appeared in Prince Damrong's *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam* (*Tamnan phuttha chedi Sayam*). However, he divided 'Chiang Saen period' art into two groups, i.e., Chiang Saen period-early type and Chiang Saen period-later type. Besides, he also added the U Thong period. Coedes' periodisation is as follows: Dvaravati period (*Samai Dvaravati*) (Fig. 4.1.), Srivijaya period (*Samai Srivichai*) (Fig. 4.2.), Lopburi period (*Samai Lopburi*) (Fig. 4.3.), Chiang Saen period-early type (*Samai Chiang Saen-run raek*) (Fig. 4.4.), Sukhothai period (*Samai Sukhothai*) (Fig. 4.5.), Chiang Saen period-later type (*Samai Chiang Saen-run lang*) (Fig. 4.6.), U-Thong period (*Samai U-Thong*) (Fig. 4.7.).

Interestingly, regarding artefacts in the Ayutthaya period (*Samai Ayutthaya*), Coedes suggested that '...the craftsmanship in this period declined. As a result, I did not include any mention of the pictures in the Ayutthaya period in this book' (Coedes 1928, 40).

It is important to note that the periodisation discussed above had considerable influence over the study of art history in Thailand as it had been recognised for another 80 years by researchers and students in the Establishment School. These include most people in the country. This has been so even though Coedes said in his review of Reginald Le May's *Concise History of Buddhist Art in Siam* (1938) that:

> ... while assuring him of my very sincere gratitude, I am tempted to lay blame on him for having followed me [Ars Asiatica 1928] so faithfully in establishing his chronological framework and his division of images into school. He has, assuredly, in certain matters rectified my chronology, and he has brought to completion my picture of classification into schools, but he has in general stuck

> to my nomenclature: ...I never thought I was creating a definitive nomenclature...(Coedes cited in Woodward 1978, 76-77).[3]

4.2.1. The Politics of Periodisation

What do we learn from the above? That the art styles were correlated with the historical periods may be due to the influence of political concepts like the periodisation of Thai history. It should be noted that Prince Damrong was a member of the Thai political elite, while Coedes came from France, the imperialist country. Hence, there is reason to believe that the written work of these two persons were integrated with political concepts at the time, i.e., kingdom building and nation building associated with an attempt to create the picture of a 'great and old country' as discussed above. For this reason, ancient ruins were therefore part of the art of the kingdom, and were built for the kingdom.

Furthermore, the art was also used as a mechanism to substantiate the existence of, as well as the importance of, these kingdoms. In other words, the art was used to show the size, and economic prosperity and stability of the kingdoms. As Prince Damrong's *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam* (*Tamnan phuttha chedi Sayam*) says:

> With regard to the style of Buddha statues built in the Dvaravati period, it is surprising that the statues having the same character were built as far as Burirum province...the *cakka*[4] found in Nakhon Ratchasima was also believed to have been built in the transition period. Also, a Buddha statue having the character of 'Dvaravati period' was found at Dong Srimahabhoti in Prachinburi. ...Based on this evidence, it was believed that the territory of Dvaravati kingdom extended as far as Prachinburi and Nakhon Ratchasima (Damrong Rajanubhab 1960, 95-6).

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[3] See Coedes, G. (1939). Reginald Le May: A Concise History of Buddhist Art. *Journal of the Siam Society*, 31(2): 193.

[4] *Cakka* (P), *cakra* (S) or *cak* (T) is a disc or wheel representing in Buddhism the Wheel of the Law (*dhammacakka*) which Buddha set into motion when he preached his first sermon (Fickle 1974, 12).

Another factor causing the correlation between art styles and historical periods may be attributed to the approach that the scholars in the past used to study the history of art. As I have mentioned, the study of history and of art history at first were not separated from each other. As a result, the differences between the historical approach and the art historical approach were not paid as much attention to as should have been the case. Scholars such as Prince Damrong in his *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam* (*Tamnan phuttha chedi Sayam*) for example, assumed the historical approach to study art in Thailand. He investigated the historical evidence first and plotted the history of Thai art following what the historical evidence said. He correlated the art style to the historical periods, which had already been periodised before.

4.2.2. Revising the periodisation of Thai art history

Next, we trace how the Alternative School contends that the periodisation of art in Thailand based on the concept and methodology described above is not suitable. The reasons given are as follows:

Firstly, although the art styles in Thailand have been classified on the basis of similarity, each group has however been named without concrete principles (Piriya 1997/8, 14). For instance, the art style was sometimes named after the names of the kingdoms or towns in which most examples of the styles were found. The art was then periodised according to the period when those kingdoms or states had most prosperity, such as Dvaravati, Srivijaya, and Sukhothai. The art was sometimes named after the cities in which Buddha statues were considered (by Coedes) more 'beautiful and older' than those having the same character but found in different places. Examples include Chiang Saen town. Also, the art was sometimes named after the king such as U Thong.

Secondly, the periodisation conducted by the correlation between the art styles and the names of the kingdoms could lead to misleading results. That is the belief that the art styles and periods in each kingdom emerged and ended at the same time (Piriya 1977, 12). Also misleading is the assumption that such art styles had to have been created in that kingdom. In reality, art did not emerge and end at the same time as the kingdoms did. There could be various styles of art in a certain period of time. Furthermore, the art works sometimes existed although the political power of a kingdom had collapsed.

Thirdly, confusion took place as a result of the unsystematic use of the words *samai* (historical period) and *baeb* (art style) (Phiset 1978, 41). Obviously, the use of the word *samai* in front of art styles such as *Samai Dvaravati*, *Samai Srivichai*, *Samai Chiang Saen*, *Samai Lopburi*, etc. could easily mislead readers that the art work existed in that particular 'historical period', rather than just indicating the name of the style of the art itself. For example, some may misunderstand that the ancient ruins called '*Samai Sukhothai*' mean the ancient ruins dated in the Sukhothai period and created in the Sukhothai kingdom. The truth, however, is that the term '*Samai Sukhothai*' is a name of an art style that could actually be periodised in the Ayutthaya period or have been created in other areas.

As a result of the confusion discussed above, Thai scholars have attempted to work such a problem out by replacing the word *samai* with *baeb* such as to change from '*Silpa samai Dvaravati*' (Dvaravati period art) to '*Silpa baeb Dvaravati*' (Dvaravati art style). However, it seems that this attempt was far from successful. Prince Subhaddradis reasoned that '...most Thai people were familiar with the word '*samai*'. They often mistake the word '*baeb*' for '*kan lian baeb*' which means 'imitation'. For this reason,

the phrase '*Silpa Dvaravati*' was later invented to sort out this problem (Subhaddradis 1978, 23).

Next, the art in Thailand is mainly created to express belief in Buddhism. A Buddha image is typically a copy of its stylistic prototype (replica). If any Buddha image is believed to be holistic and highly respected, that Buddha image will be made in exactly the same style with the aim to maintain the exclusive characteristics thereof. This is to maintain the holiness of each sect of Buddhism in each period of time. Thus, change in Buddhist art has nothing to do with the emergence or the end of kingdoms (Piriya 1999, 1).

Moreover, after Coedes (1928, 34) named the art styles found in the Malay Peninsular as 'Srivijaya period', he suggested further:

> '...the artefacts derived from the Malay Peninsular were created by many different schools of art. Many were totally different from Java's artwork. Some were similar to the genuine Indian style, some were similar to 'Dvaravati period' style [Fig. 4.8.]'.

What is interesting is why the art style that was similar to Dvaravati period style was not classified as 'Dvaravati period' style.

Besides, it is still controversial whether a Srivijaya kingdom existed - and if so, where it was and how far did the territory went. The controversial issue of Srivijaya has been disputed for more than half a century after the publication of Coedes' article, *Le royaume de Crivijaya*, in 1918 (Rajani 1974, 174). The Chinese written evidence of a seventh century pilgrim I-Chiang telling about a place called Shih-li-fo-shih, a toponym of Srivijaya and the inscriptions which mention Srivijaya by name, influenced Coedes to think that there was indeed a powerful kingdom named Srivijaya having authority

over the whole of the Malay Peninsular and the island of Sumatra (Fine Arts Department 1988, 49). Some scholars supported Coedes' hypothesis, but some also gave new, different ideas. However, we should keep in mind that the word 'Srivijaya' on the inscription could be applied to anything. It could be the name of a human, village, city, river, mountain or any particular place. As a result, the name Srivijaya may not mean a kingdom, as Coedes contemplated.

Lastly, Coedes (1928, 37) named 'Chiang Saen period art- early type' due to its 'beauty'. But who decided that it was beautiful? What is the criterion of beauty? Current art books published today still refer to 'Chiang Saen period art' to define one particular art style; however, they do not give the reason why. This is because the reason Coedes gave will not be acceptable for people in this generation. Clearly, to conclude whether something is beautiful is subjective, which should not be used in academic work. As a result, there is no convincing reason for naming such art as 'Chiang Saen period'.

Despite a great deal of confusion, the classification of art styles currently used is still based on the principles postulated by Prince Damrong and Coedes almost 8 decades ago. However, there was a change, which avoided use of the word '*samai*' (period) to prevent complication about 'historical period' and 'art style'. Also, there was some addition of the styles of art such as those made by A.B. Griswold and Luang Boribal Buribhand (1952, 13), who added the category of 'Pre Khmer Brahmanic art'. Also M.C. Subhaddradis (1970, 1) added the new group of 'early objects discovered in Thailand'.

4.3. Art Period in a New Perspective

4.3.1. Art Styles in Thailand: Piriya's art classification in 1977

As far as the periodisation and classification of art styles in Thailand is concerned, we now turn to the proposals of Piriya Krairiksh. In August 1977, the National Museum organised the art history exhibition on the Art Styles in Thailand, featuring Piriya's work. Importantly, Piriya came up with a new concept in classifying the art styles in Thailand. Although his suggestions were not recognised as a replacement for the existing periodisation at the time, it drew considerable attention from many scholars.

Piriya (1977, 36)'s concept suggested that:

> ...the discipline of art history is concerned with the continuity, changes and interaction of styles, which have lives of their own and cannot be made neatly congruent with the rise and fall of monarch or an empire. As art history is the study of style, a classification to be valid must be based on style... Style in art is a reflection of a personality of the artist who is conditioned by the culture, environment and the society in which he lives. Hence, art style among a group of people sharing the same customs, religion and tradition, and undergoing similar experiences, tends to be consistent in form and spirit. It is the collective expression of a society at a given time and space.

For this reason, he suggested art in Thailand be classified into four major styles 'corresponding to ethnic factors: Mon, Khmer and Thai...art styles and those found on the Peninsula constituting a separate group.' Also he said, 'Within those four broad categories, the style of each locality should be studied as a distinct entity, yet together with its interrelations with neighbouring art styles' (Piriya 1977, 48).

Piriya (1977, 38) suggested the word *Silpa Samai Dvaravati* (Dvaravati period art) be superseded by the word *Silpa Mon (Mon art or Mon style)* as he believed that Mon people created the work in this style. Such work included an inscription written in the

Mon language. Also, Piriya suggested that Mon art be called by the name of the place where it is found. For example, the Mon art found in Nakhorn Pathom province should be called Mon art, Nakhon Prathom style.

Furthermore, Piriya (ibid., 39-40) suggested that the word *Silpa samai Lopburi* (Lopburi period art) be replaced by *Silpa Khamen* (*Khmer art*). The reason is that the art classified in this group emerged under the cultural and political influence of the Khmer kingdom.

Moreover, Piriya (ibid., 41) suggested *Silpa Thai* (Thai art) is the term that should represent a body of artwork that emerged after 'the establishment of the Thai principalities around the thirteenth century AD,' when ' a completely new approach to aesthetic orientation prevailed over the land once under Khmer suzerainty' (ibid., 41). In other words, instead of classifying the styles of Thai art as 'Chiang Saen', 'Sukhothai', 'U Thong', or 'Ayutthaya,' as previously classified, Piriya suggested the word Silpa Thai be used for all the works in these groups before breaking them down further according to local characteristics, such as Chiangmai style, Kampaengphet style, Suphanburi style and Ayutthaya style. Simultaneously, Piriya classified the body of art previously called U-Thong art within the category Thai art, Ayutthaya style.

The last body of art classified by Piriya was 'Peninsular' style. It superseded the previous art group called *Silpa samai Srivichai* (Srivijaya period art). However, Piriya (ibid., 17) called the Peninsular style in Thai as '*Silpa Klum Chon Phak Tai*', which means the art of the people of southern Thailand. Notably, Piriya refused to call the art found in southern Thailand *Silpa samai Srivichai* because he was one of those who were sceptical about the existence, location, and influence of Srivichai kingdom. Besides,

there were various styles of art found in southern Thailand. As a result, the study of art styles should be based on the original style of those art styles. For example, Piriya classified the Bodhisattva Padmapani (Fig. 4.9.) which was found at Tambon Ban Kradang Nga, Sathing Phra District, Songkhla as 'Peninsular art, Pala influence'. (Piriya 1977, 82)

Piriya justifies the objectives of the grouping of this kind of art styles as follows: 'The proposed classification of art styles is designed to separate 'style' from 'historical period', dispensing with generalisation that obscures the complexities of stylistic relationships with irrelevant political or other considerations' (Piriya 1977, 48). Besides, when asked what the greatest advantage of his classification is, he replied 'It brings logic and discipline to the study of Thai art history. The basic advantage of my system is that it makes sense and is consistent' (Beebe 1979, 196).

Although Piriya's new suggestions are an effort to sort out the confusion resulting from classifying art style based on historical periods, his new suggestion which classified the art style according to the race of those who created the art work brought a new kind of confusion, followed by numerous arguments. These include the following.

4.3.1.1. The problem of 'Mon art' (*Silpa Mon*)

The use of a race's name to refer to art style causes a misunderstanding that the art was necessarily created by people of those ethnicities or nationals. That is, a proposal to replace Dvaravati art with Mon art may mislead the readers that it was only Mon people who created the art.

A question then arises, how can we be sure that the art was really created by Mon people? Although it is recognised that there were many Mon people living in central Thailand in the Dvaravati period as some Mon-language inscriptions were found, such art was also found in the northeast of the country. Moreover, some scholars have noted that 'the discovery of inscriptions and slabs inscribed in old Mon could mean just that the Mon alphabet had a certain popularity being as it was a development from the script used by the Pallava of Southern India' (Sanguan 1978, 38).

Phiset (1978, 47) also highlights the confusion emanating from the vagueness of the term 'Mon art'. He said:

> A people in archaeology are a group of communities with a common culture. Only if archaeology makes discoveries of significance to physical anthropology concerning the physiology of a people and in proven conjunction with cultural evidences of the same people is the term 'people' replaced by 'race'. This distinction becomes blurred when for example, the Mon people are referred to as simply 'the Mon' and it is lost when [Thai] writers use such phrases as 'Mon nationals' [*chon chat Mon*], 'descendents of the early Mons' [*chue sai Mon*] or, worse still 'the Mon race' [*chue chat Mon*]. Even to use the phrase 'the Mon people' as Acarya Piriya does [see Piriya 1977, 38] frequently leads to misunderstandings and we are never sure whether 'Mon art' is meant to be the work of a race, a culture or a system of government or all three at once.

As for naming art styles in detail according to the locality, Subhaddradis (1978,31) disagrees. As he says, "Styles and schools should be proposed only after a number of finds have been made and a study of their resemblance undertaken. One cannot simply find an isolated piece and assign it to a local style or school of its own. There would be as many styles as there are, or rather were, towns."

4.3.1.2. The problem of 'Khmer art' *(Silpa Khamen)*

Although the majority of scholars have recognised that it is inappropriate to use the word *Silpa samai Lopburi or Silpa Lopburi* (Lopburi art) for naming the art style

influenced by all Khom or Khmer found in Thailand, to use the term 'Khmer art' instead has not been recognised as a better alternative. The reason is that this may lead to a misunderstanding that it is the art created by the Khom or Khmer while it could actually be a person of any ethnic or national origin who created the art in the Khom or Khmer style.

Subhaddradis, to support his argument, cites Jean Boisselier who did not agree with the use of the term 'Khmer art' instead of 'Lopburi art'. Boisselier held the view that art in Thailand which was influenced by Khom or Khmer art is so unique that it should not be called Khom or Khmer art. Examples include the windows' octagon bars at Phanomwan stone palace, Nakhon Ratchasima, a form that has never been found in Cambodia (Subhaddradis 1978, 25).

Not least, given that the use of the words Khom and Khmer are still controversial, i.e., a firm conclusion has not been reached as to what is correct usage between calling those nationals Khom or Khmer, to label this type of art 'Khmer art' is therefore inappropriate.

4.3.1.3. The problem of 'Thai art' (*Silpa Thai*)

Piriya suggested that 'with the establishment of Thai principalities around the thirteenth century A.D., a completely new approach to aesthetic orientation prevailed over the land once under Khmer suzerainty' (Piriya 1977, 41). Following that suggestion, questions arose among the general audience: if Thai art made its debut around the thirteenth century AD., where were the Thai before then? What did they do? Did they not have any art? And what was the cause of an emergence of 'a completely new approach to aesthetic orientation'?

Subhaddradis further disagrees with Piriya's suggestions to classify the art previously called U-Thong art within Ayutthaya styles. His arguments include criticism that the picture nos. 56 (Fig. 4.10.) and 57 (Fig. 4.11.) in Piriya's *Art Styles in Thailand* are totally different. While the former was previously classified as an example of U-Thong art and the latter an Ayutthaya example which imitated the Sukhothai art, Piriya had somehow named and periodised the art as the same (Subhaddradis 1978, 25).

4.3.1.4. The problem of 'Peninsular art' (*Silpa Khum Chon Phak Tai*)

The argument on this issue emanated from those who believed in the theory of Coedes on the existence and influence of the Srivijaya kingdom, thereby using the term Srivijaya art without any reluctance. However, as discussed earlier, a conclusion on what Srivijaya was has never been reached. Piriya therefore argued that it is inappropriate to use Srivijaya as the name of an art style.

Against this backdrop, the term 'Peninsular art' has been introduced despite limited recognition. As Sanguan (1978, 35) suggests, the organisation of 'the art of people of Southern Thailand' to replace Srivijaya art is awkward. It is vague and too broad to give a definition of what the ethnic or national background of the people of Southern Thailand could have been or in what period they lived.

4.3.1.5. Further developments regarding Piriya's proposals

It should be noted that most scholars realise problems associated with the classification of art in Thailand as postulated by Prince Damrong and Coedes. Although many have attempted to find a standpoint closest to the truth, a conclusion satisfying all people concerned has not been found.

Phiset (1978, 47) made an observation that there are concepts which contradict one another in Piriya's research. This is evidenced in Piriya's Art Styles in Thailand, page 36 of which says '...(styles) have lives of their own and cannot be made neatly congruent with the rise and fall of a monarch or an empire. As art history is the study of style, a classification to be valid must be based on style...' But on page 43, he writes '...the evolution of style within each school is inextricably linked to the changes in the economic, political, religious and social conditions of that society.'

Meanwhile, even Piriya has distanced himself from his earlier views. Despite his innovative suggestions made in 1977, he subsequently admitted that they were not appropriate because 'the classification of the art styles on the basis of ethnic background and school of art still stick with the study of art history according to Western approaches, which does not suit the study of art found in Thailand' (Piriya 1999, 2). We follow this development in the following subsection.

4.3.2. A New Chronology of Buddhist Art in Thailand: Piriya's art classification in 1999

On the 36th anniversary of the establishment of the Faculty of Art, Thammasat University on 10 August 1997, Piriya was invited to present his new research work, 'The modification of periods of Buddhist art in Thailand'. This was another presentation on the periodisation of art style in Thailand. More importantly, he improved this piece of work and presented it to a seminar at the Faculty of Art, Thammasat University, on 30 June 1999.

4.3.2.1. The importance of Buddhism for Thai art history

As Piriya argues, the periodisation of the old art style erred because researchers followed the Western approach in studying art, which focussed on the study of the styles of art only, and did not pay any attention to the iconography or beliefs or religious customs (Piriya 1999, 3). As discussed earlier, most of the art in Thailand was created as a result of belief in Buddhism. For example, Buddha statues are created to as tangible symbols of Buddhist philosophy, which is abstract. Hence, if the periodisation of art style is made on the basis of the period of a religious sect associated with the art, it will serve as a tool to study the changes and diversity of philosophical Buddhism in Thailand more effectively (Piriya 1999, 5).

After studying the iconography of Buddhist art in Thailand, Piriya has classified those arts in accordance with changes in Buddhism in each period as follows (Piriya 1999, 6-18):

1. The early Hinayana Buddhism (The Mahasamghika school and the Mulasavastivada school): Mid-Fifth to Mid- Seventh Centuries.
2. The Mahayana Buddhism, Mid-Sixth to Tenth Centuries.
3. The Hinayana Buddhism, Theravada school, Mid-Seventh to Early Tenth Centuries.
4. The Vajrayana Buddhism: Mid-Eighth to Mid-Fourteenth Centuries.

   Vajrayana art in Thailand can be divided into 3 groups as follow:

   1). Indo-Javanese Vajrayana: Mid-Eighth to Mid-Eleventh Centuries.

   2) the Khmer Vajrayana: Mid-Tenth to Mid-Thirteenth Centuries.

   3) Vajrayana in Thailand
5. The Lankavamsa school of Buddhism (Sinhalese Theravada): Mid-Fourteenth to Mid-Sixteenth Centuries.

6. The Sayamvamsa school of Buddhism (Siamese Theravada): Early-Sixteenth to mid—Nineteenth centuries.
7. The Dhammayuttika school of Buddhism, Mid-Nineteenth Century to the present.

However, Piriya (1999, 6) reiterates that '...the aforesaid classification is merely an example for the scholars to study'.

4.3.2.2. Iconography and philosophical orientation

In his conclusion, Piriya (1999, 18) argues that his suggestions to modify the periods of Buddhist arts in Thailand are aimed at grouping the Thai Buddhist arts on the basis of a correct system of research methodology. In his suggested new classification, he bases his periodisation of each ancient ruin on the iconography according to the evolution of belief and change of Buddhist philosophy. For example, Buddha images with the right hand executing the gesture of argumentation (*vitarkamudra*), and the left hand holding the end of the robe, the upper robe covering the left shoulder with the pleats falling along the left side of the body (Fig. 4.12.) are classified as art in the Mahasamghika sect. This was how Mahasamghikas dressed as described by I-tsing, a 7th century Chinese monk.

Another example can be seen from the Buddha image dressed in royal attire. This is grouped in the Siamese Theravada sect which always indicates the symbolic relationship between monarchy and religion. Piriya later periodised the Buddhist arts, the methodology of which was different from that of Prince Damrong and Coedes, who began their periodisation with historical evidence before weaving the ancient ruins in-between.

Piriya suggests further that Prince Damrong and Coedes's approaches should be rejected because it is inappropriate to manipulate the Buddhist arts as a tool to create images for history. The reason is that such images became an impediment for the progress of historical research (ibid.).

4.3.2.3. Strong and weak points in Piriya's 1999 proposals: an assessment

Considering a variety of approaches discussed above, I agree with Piriya in terms of the problems resulting from the classification of art styles based on historical periods. I also agree with Piriya's concept and research methodology, i.e., the study of artefacts' art history should begin with the artefacts themselves, not the historical evidence. And given that most of the arts in Thailand is Buddhist art, things we can learn from such arts are religious stories, not political history. Put it simply, it is appropriate to classify the art on the basis of religious sects, which are the inspiration for the emergence of those arts.

However, it is a demanding task to pinpoint the sect in which the Buddhist arts were created as the differences between each sect are sometimes minimal.

What deserves more attention is that, based on Piriya's argument, many sacred images have emerged from replication. A central question is: how can we be sure that the meaning of the 100th copy remains the same as the original? Possibly, those who replicate the images may be intending to create a Buddha image as the principal in the *ubosot* without the intention of imitating a particular one. Nor do they know the meaning of the image.

Besides, it is obvious that the respect for Buddhism in Thailand is not absolutely strict. Despite the respect for Buddhism, many people also respect gods in sects of Hinduism. For example, King Lithai, who ruled Sukhothai in the 14th century, while in his monkhood, he had the statue of Isavara, a sacred Hindu image, built (Fine Arts Department 1983, 232, 236). This was perhaps because some philosophies of Buddhism could not respond to people's needs, such as a request for rain or a request for fertility. At present, there are many people calling themselves 'Buddhists', while simultaneously respecting Hindu gods. Moreover, of those who create Buddha images many do not pay attention to the religion they respect. For instance, it is a tacit assumption that most Thais respect Hinayana Buddhism, but the images of Kuan-yin, who is believed to be a Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism, are currently pervasive.

Based on the above discussions, although I agree with Piriya's suggestion, it is obvious that to make concept into an action plan is almost out of the question. Hence, I am of the opinion that, at the time of writing, there is a very slim possibility for Piriya's innovative suggestion on the classification of Buddhist art to be widely recognised or to replace the framework postulated by Price Damrong and Coedes, unless further improvements are made or more study is conducted.

4.4. Conclusion

The periodisation conducted by the correlation between the art styles and the names of the kingdoms as suggested by pioneer researchers has been seen as misleading in that this procedure implies that the art styles and periods in each kingdom emerged and ended at the same time. Also it could mislead by implying that a given art style must be created in that particular kingdom. In reality, art did not emerge and end at the same

time as the kingdoms did. There could be various styles of art in a given period of time. Furthermore, the art works sometimes existed although the political power of a kingdom had collapsed.

Even among many art historians associated with the Establishment School, it has been realised that a study of the history of Thai art dictated by political conceptions could not lead them to a fulfilment of the purpose of study. Attempts to improve the system of periodisation have been made in various ways, but no conclusions have been reached yet.

As for the Alternative School, although Piriya's suggestion in 1977 is an effort to sort out the confusion in classifying art styles resulting from historical periods, this new suggestion classifies art styles according to the ethnicities or races of those who created the art work. This system however has brought about a similar kind of confusion to the older system but in a new framework. Piriya's newest proposed chronology in 1999 is quite revolutionary as this system not only aims to date and group the art styles, but also gives a new approach to the meaning of art itself. However, Piriya's innovative suggestion on the classification of Buddhist art has not yet had time to arouse much controversy. I have pointed to some possible weaknesses in the practical application of this system that may give rise to criticism of Piriya's latest system in the future. These include the synthetic or 'multicultural' nature of Thai religious sensibilities and the related practical problem of associating art styles with particular religious beliefs or schools.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This thesis has investigated two schools of Thai art history, the Establishment School and the Alternative School, and has shown how, and suggested why, their approaches to the dating of Thai art have differed substantially.

Chapter 1 indicates the importance of the historical study of art in Thailand as well as the background of problems associated with the study. Chapter 2 traces the development of the approaches studied in order to understand how the political and cultural environment influenced the historical study of art in Thailand. Chapter 3 analyses the differences of methodologies applied by the Establishment School and Alternative Schools, as well as their strong and weak points. Chapter 4 investigates how the different conceptions of Thai art have made the study of Thai art history diverse.

The study supports the following general conclusions.

1. Political and cultural context of development

The contrast between the schools can be accounted for partly by their different political and cultural contexts of development. The Establishment School developed under particular political and cultural conditions in Thailand, such as colonialism, the building up of the absolutist state, nationalism as well as the traditional Thai educational system. The Alternative School, led by Dr Piriya Krairiksh, has different roots. Piriya grew up and completed his education abroad, in a very different environment.

For the Establishment School, in order to protect Siam from the threat of the West, there was an attempt to create a long and continuous picture of Thai history. Ancient ruins and artefacts in Thailand became important as evidence demonstrating the high degree of civilisation of the country. Starting in the late 19th century, the leading Establishment School figures, Prince Damrong and G. Coedes, periodised Thai art styles by correlating them to Thai political kingdoms. In this way, art was used to show the continuity of Thai history as well as to confirm the prosperity and cultural achievements of each kingdom. The interest in and collection of ancient art also became a social value representing 'high culture'.

With the building of the absolutist state during Chulalongkorn's reign, historiography put much emphasis on the power of the king. The history of Thai art was thus correlated to the reign of particular kings in order to show how great that king was. For example, the art of Wat Chai Watthanaram at Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya has been taken to represent the victory of King Prasatthong (r.1629-1656) over the Khmer.

As a result of the idea of nationalism introduced by King Vajiravudh, the historiography of Thai art was made to serve the creation of a feeling of national unity and pride. This is especially obvious in Vajiravudh's *An Excursion to the Cities of King Ruang* (*Rueng thieo muang Phra Ruang*) which was explicitly written for the purpose of making 'Thais feel that Thailand is neither a new nor barbarian country'. (Mongkutklao Chaoyuhua 1983, iii)

Limitation of sources and systematic knowledge, as well as political motivation, may have caused the historiography of Thai art written by those pioneer scholars to deviate from conclusions they would have reached if more evidence had been available to them.

However, the assumptions those pioneer researchers proposed over fifty years ago have almost never been changed or questioned by scholars; hence the label 'Establishment School'. Although the present day scholars are not strongly influenced by the same political motivations as those mentioned above, they maintain the same cultural conditions. The fact that most of those pioneer scholars were the kings and members of the royal family meant that their prestige has been respected much more than a search for objective truth about art history. Moreover, the traditional Thai manner of education seems to impede creativity. As a result, the Establishment School which has developed in the atmosphere mentioned above is rather conservative, while Piriya's Alternative School is quite revolutionary.

2. The use of different methodology

Piriya rejects the assertions of Prince Damrong, Vajiravudh and other pioneer scholars as they used what he took to be the wrong approach to study the history of art in Thailand. The mistake he points to is that they rely heavily on documentary sources without considering the art styles. Although the present day Establishment School researchers do not use exactly the same approach as those of scholars in the past, they still hold to the conclusions made by those scholars and use them as a foundation in the study of many other ancient sites.

In addition, trust in different sources seems to be an essential point of distinction among these two schools. The Establishment School has tended to rely upon documentary sources, such as the royal chronicles and inscriptions, which are the subject of recent academic controversy. Piriya in the Alternative School has tended to avoid such evidence and has seen the evidence of the foreigners as more reliable.

However, this thesis has indicated that the central hypotheses of both schools have led to a certain bias in their findings, further dividing the conclusions made by each school.

3. Different conceptions of Thai art

'Art' for those pioneer scholars, such as Prince Damrong, Vajiravudh and Coedes, was seen as something belonging to kings and kingdoms, showing a kingdom's prosperity. A result of such a conception is the periodisation of Thai art by a classification of Thai art styles based on the historical period of particular kingdoms. The periodisation conducted by the correlation between the art styles and the names of the kingdoms has led to many criticisms and counter-arguments by the Alternative School, as traced in detail in chapter 4. Attempts to improve the system of periodisation have been made in various ways, but none has become conclusive. The first major proposal for re-periodisation by the Alternative School was to avoid a kingdom-based chronology by substitution of a system based on ethnic labels such as 'Mon Art' or 'Khmer Art.'

However, in the most recent proposals of the Alternative School, Piriya has stressed that art in Thailand is a product of Buddhism. He then suggests a new classification of Thai art based on the Buddhist sects which were introduced to Thailand in particular periods.

This thesis has indicated grounds for strong agreement with Piriya that much of the history of art in Thailand should be studied in the framework of religion, rather than of political history. However, I have indicated why it would be almost impossible, in practice, to analyse Thai art by grouping art styles into different Buddhist periods.

The relatively small number of those studying in the Alternative School does not necessarily mean that the position of the Establishment School is more accurate or better. Nor do we need to say that one school needs to change categorically or that one school is totally right and the other wrong. Rather, as we have seen, each school has both strengths and weaknesses. In this regard, a practical conclusion of this thesis is that the study of art history in Thailand should be reformed in accord with the three following main points:

Firstly, as the aim of this type of study is ultimately to evaluate the reality of the human past, the study of art history should strive to interpret and portray how people should be pictured in the past. The debate between the two schools at the present focuses on dating, style and periodisation of Thai art, which is not the ultimate purpose of the study.

Secondly, the educational system should be reformed. The students should be encouraged to express their own creativity. It does not matter how many different schools of thought we have, if Thai students have a critical mind. Also, Thais should feel safe to publish their own idea straightforwardly.

Lastly, it is necessary to reduce the characteristic of 'powerism' among Thai scholars. The Establishment and Alternative School have tended to become polarised sites of Thai academic power. This makes it difficult for new suggestions to be sympathetically and fairly considered by the total community of Thai art historians.

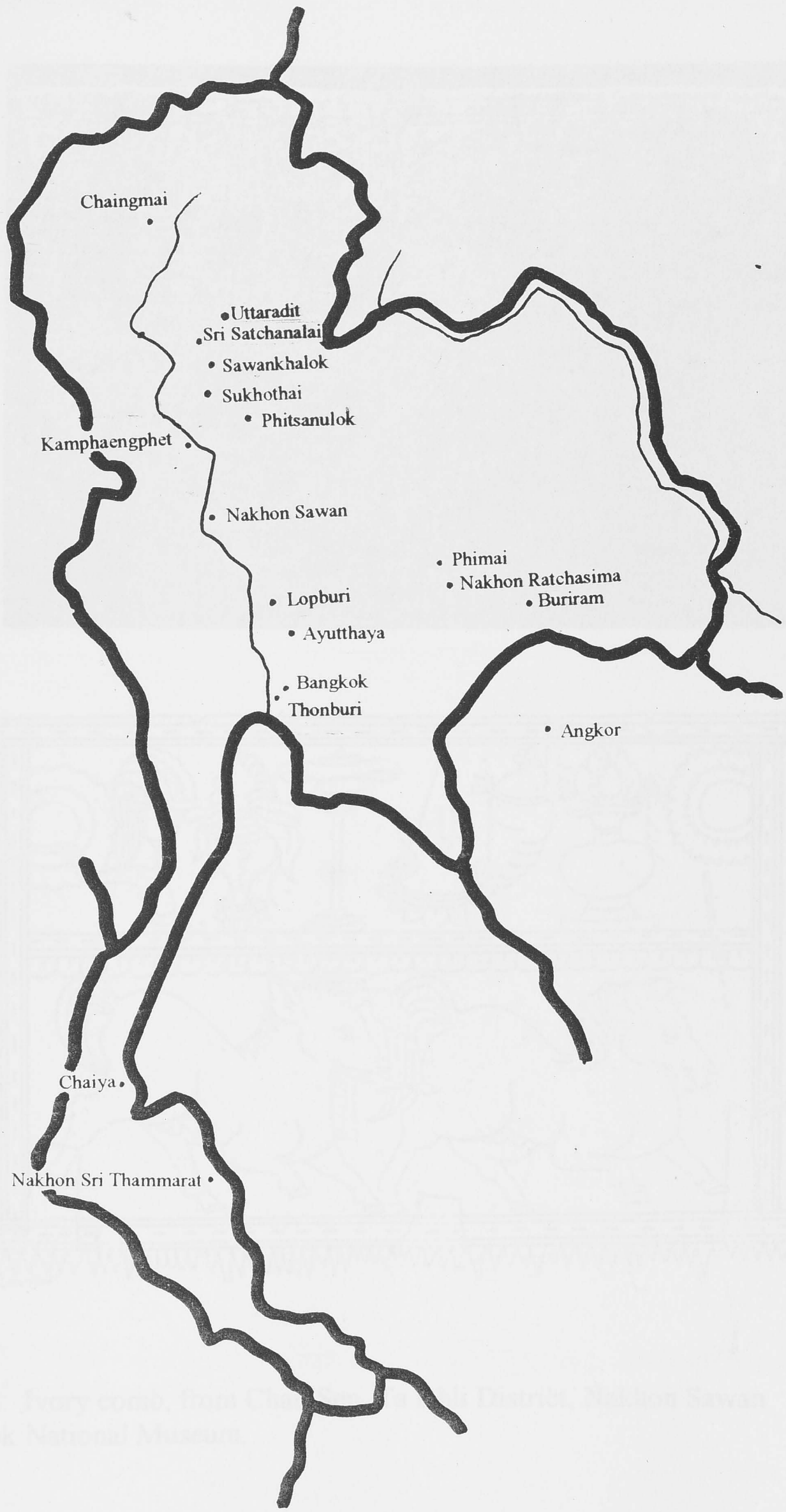

Fig. 1.1. Map of Thailand

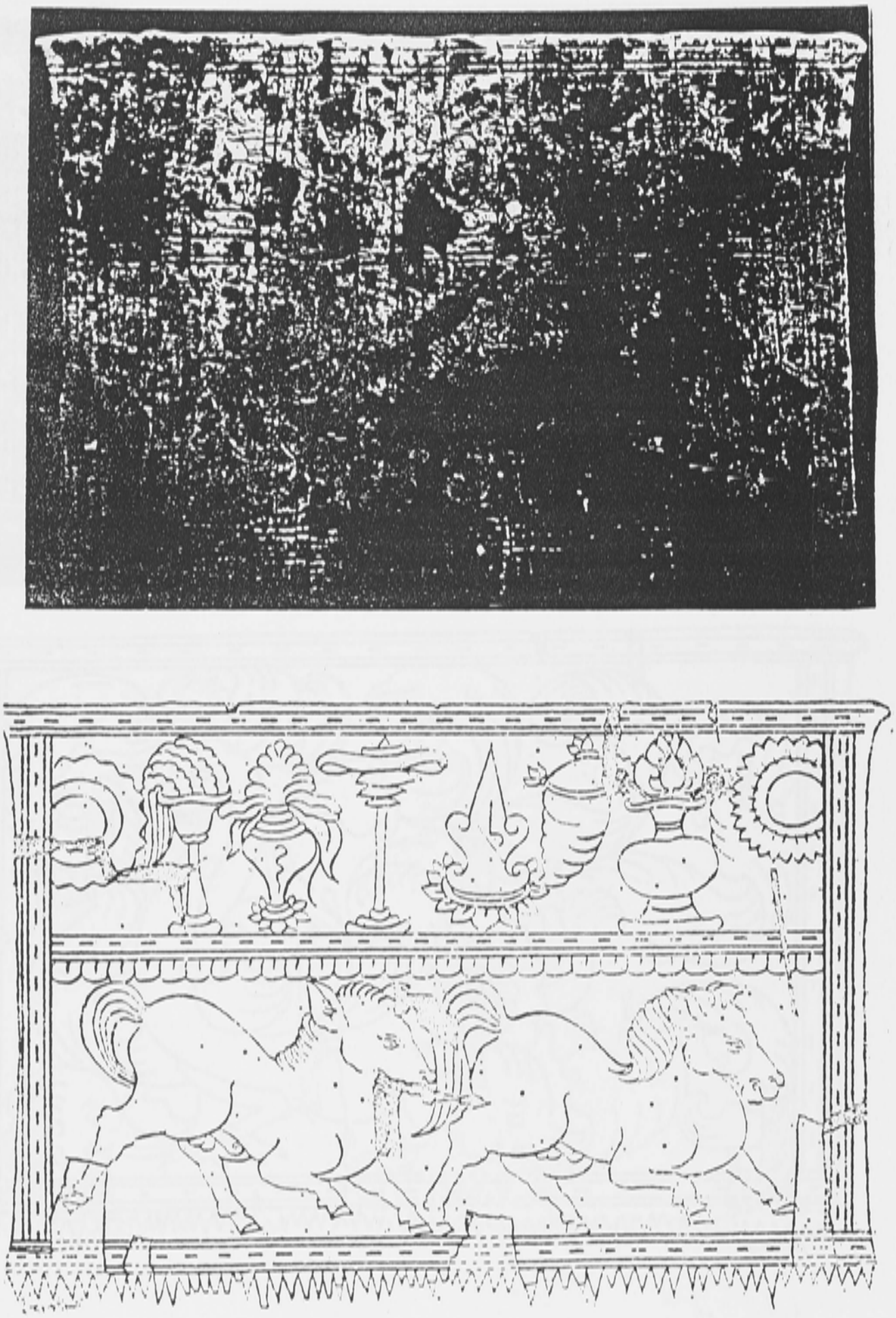

Fig. 1.2. Ivory comb, from Chan Sen, Ta Khli District, Nakhon Sawan
Bangkok National Museum.

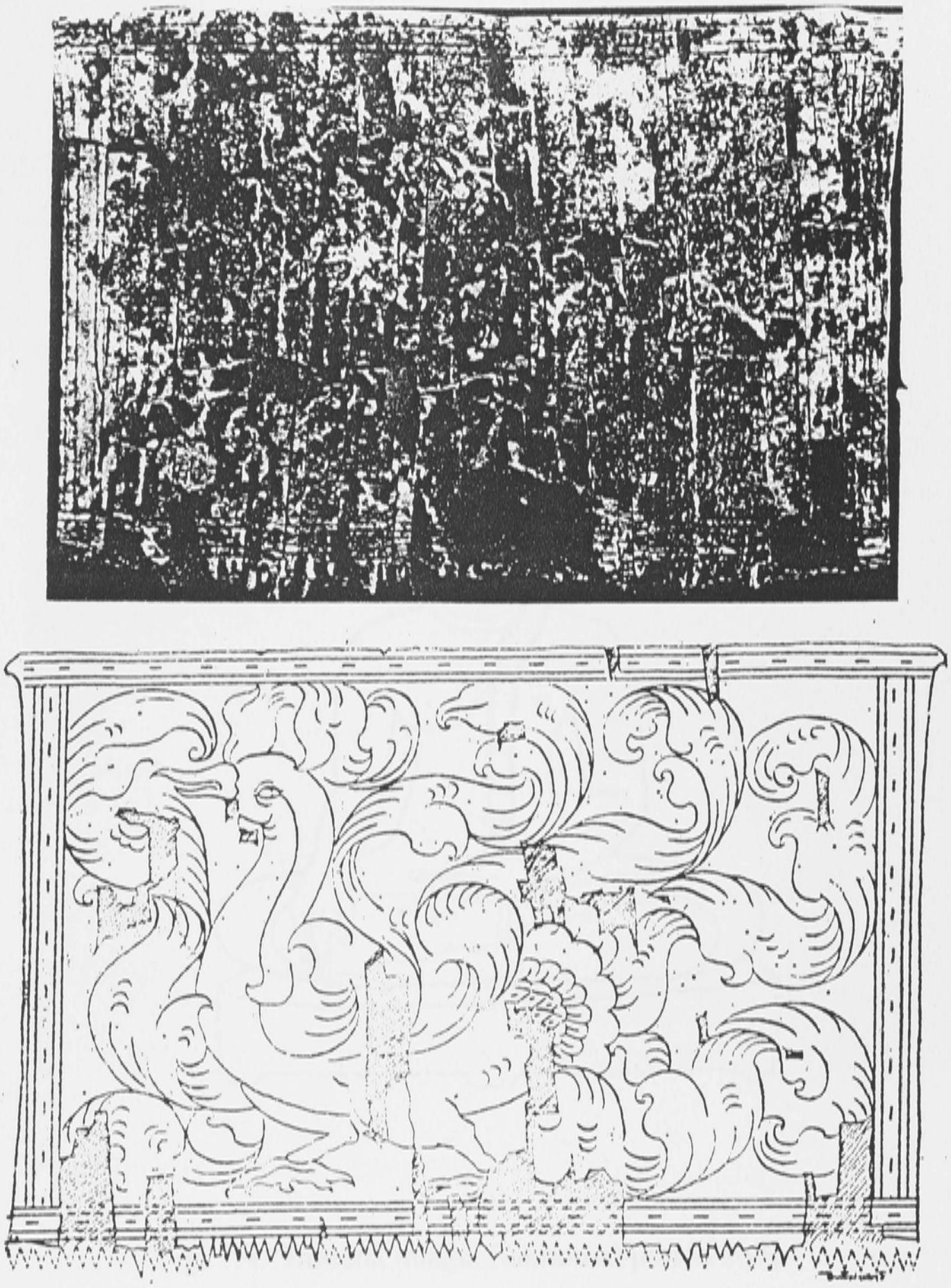

Fig. 1.3. Ivory comb, from Chan Sen, Ta Khli District, Nakhon Sawan Bangkok National Museum.

Fig. 1.4. Buddha image, Sukhothai period style

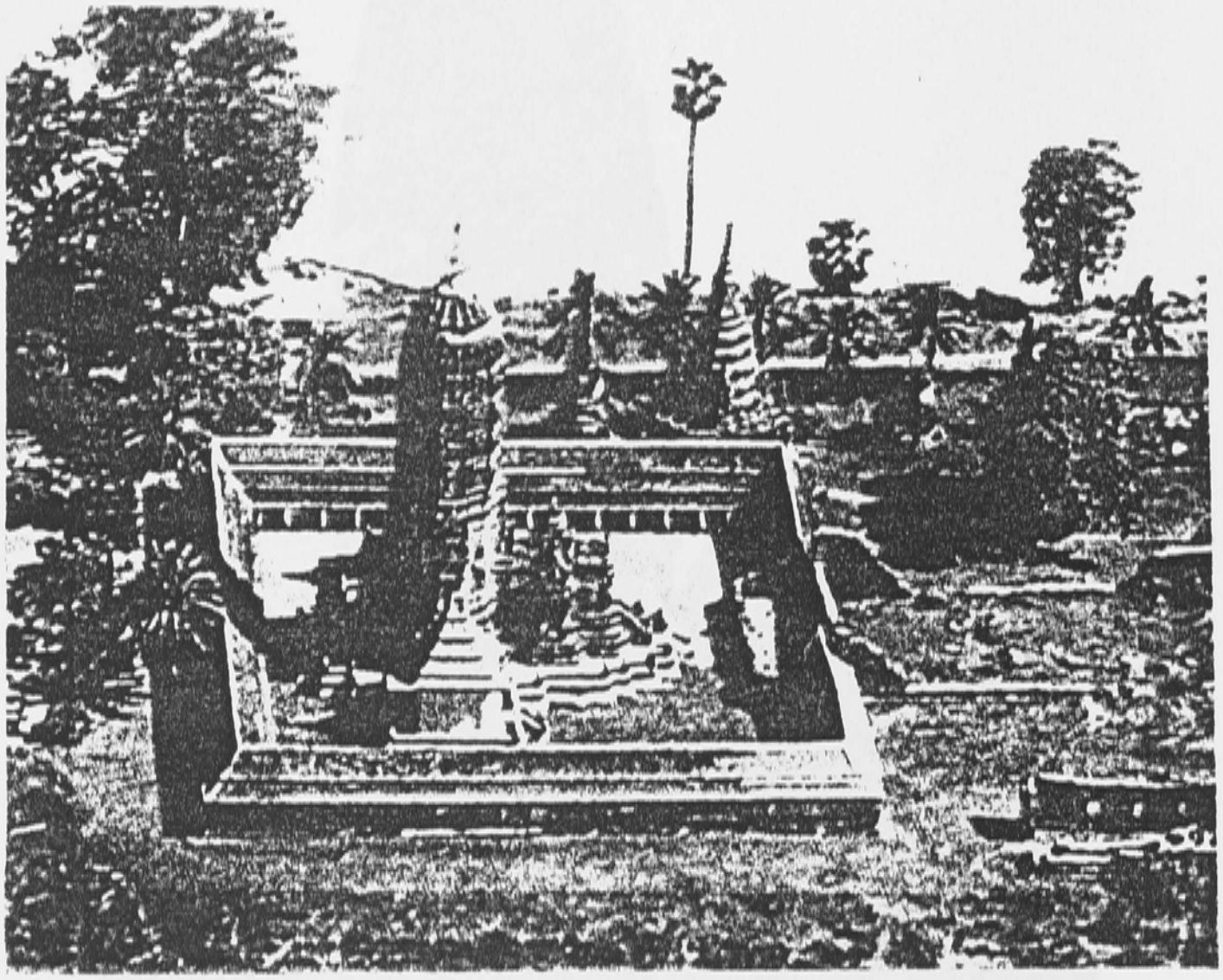

Fig. 3.1. Wat Phutthai Sawan, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

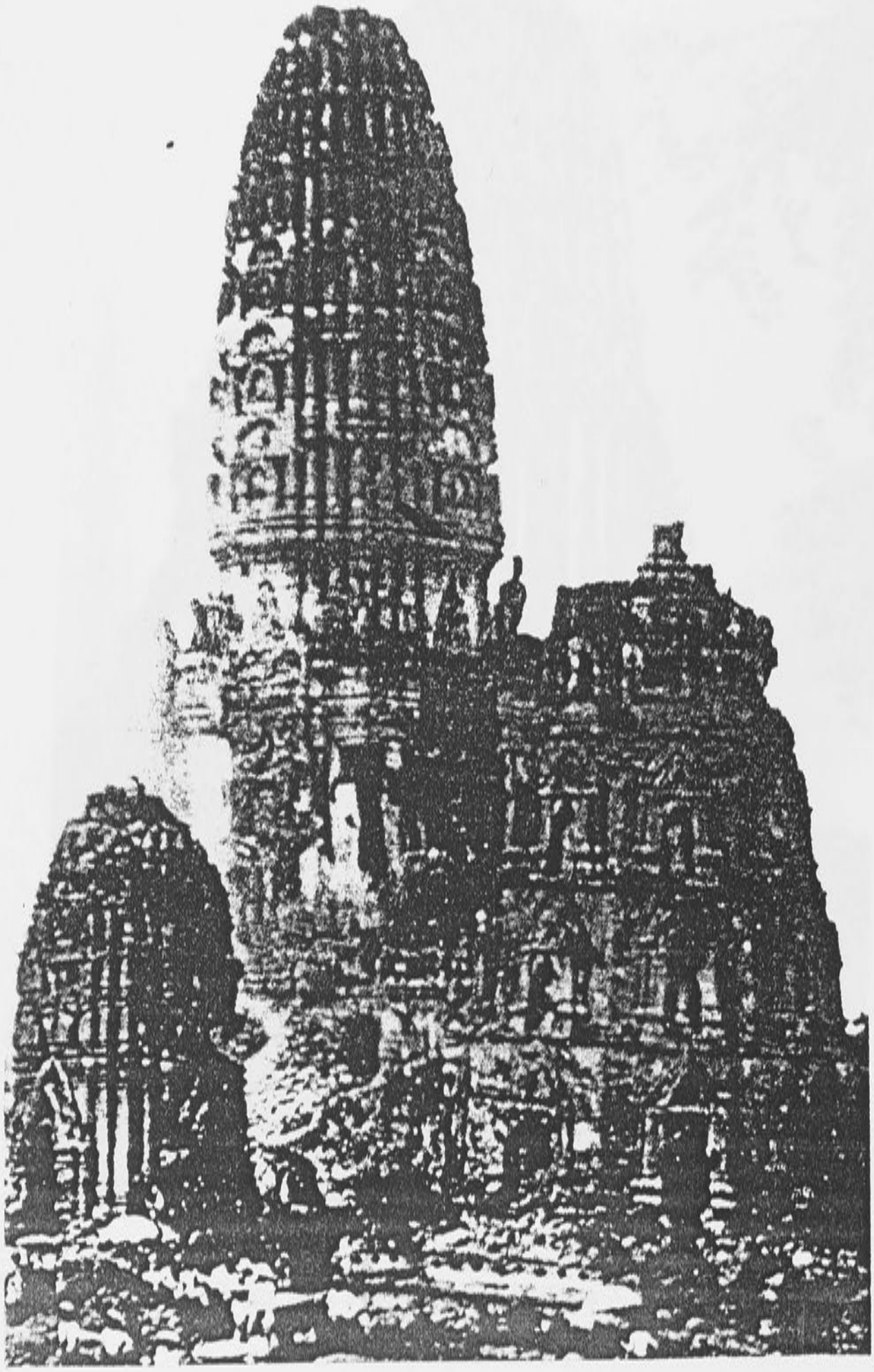

Fig. 3.2. The main *prang*, Wat Mahathat, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

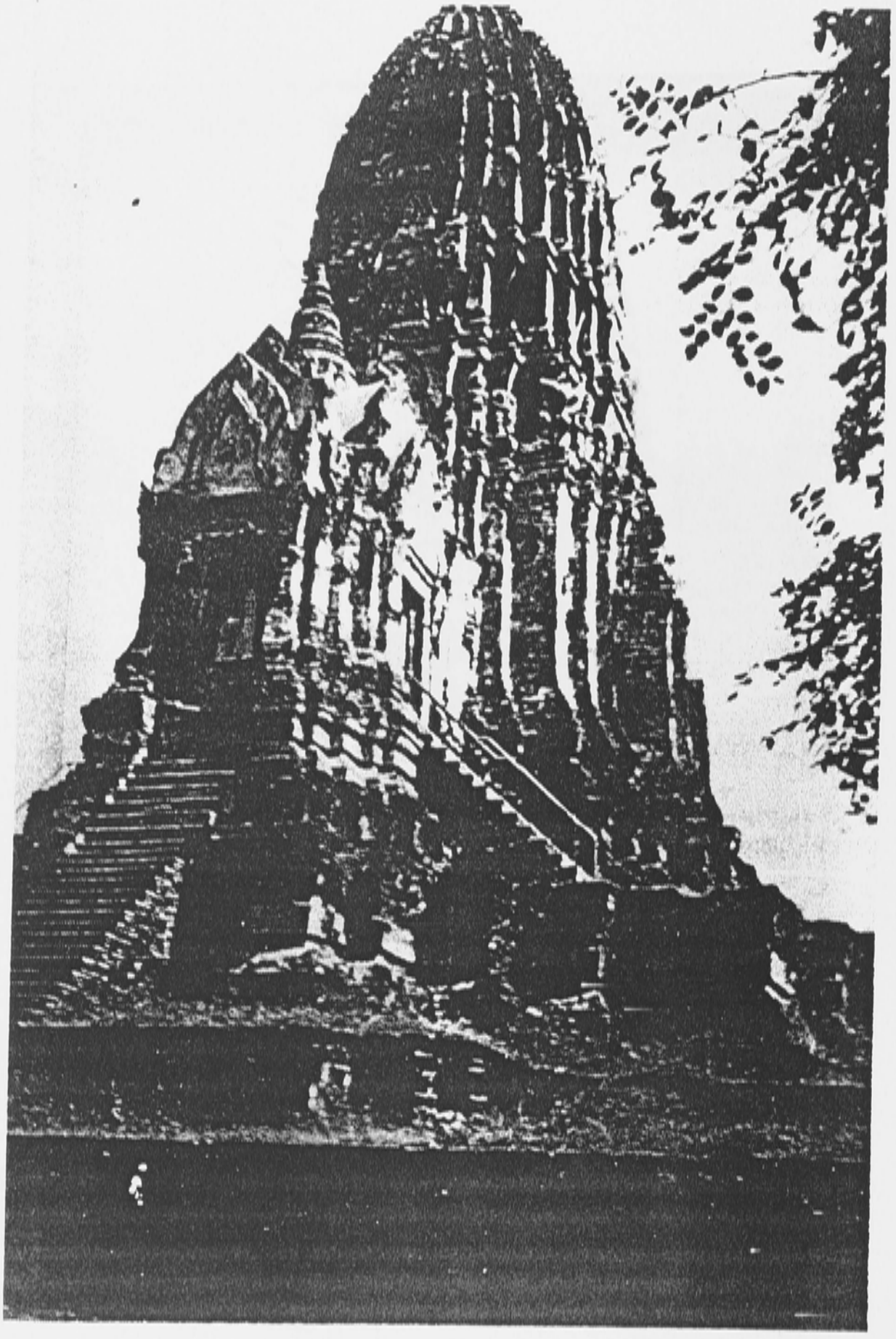

Fig. 3.3. The main *prang*, Wat Ratchaburana, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

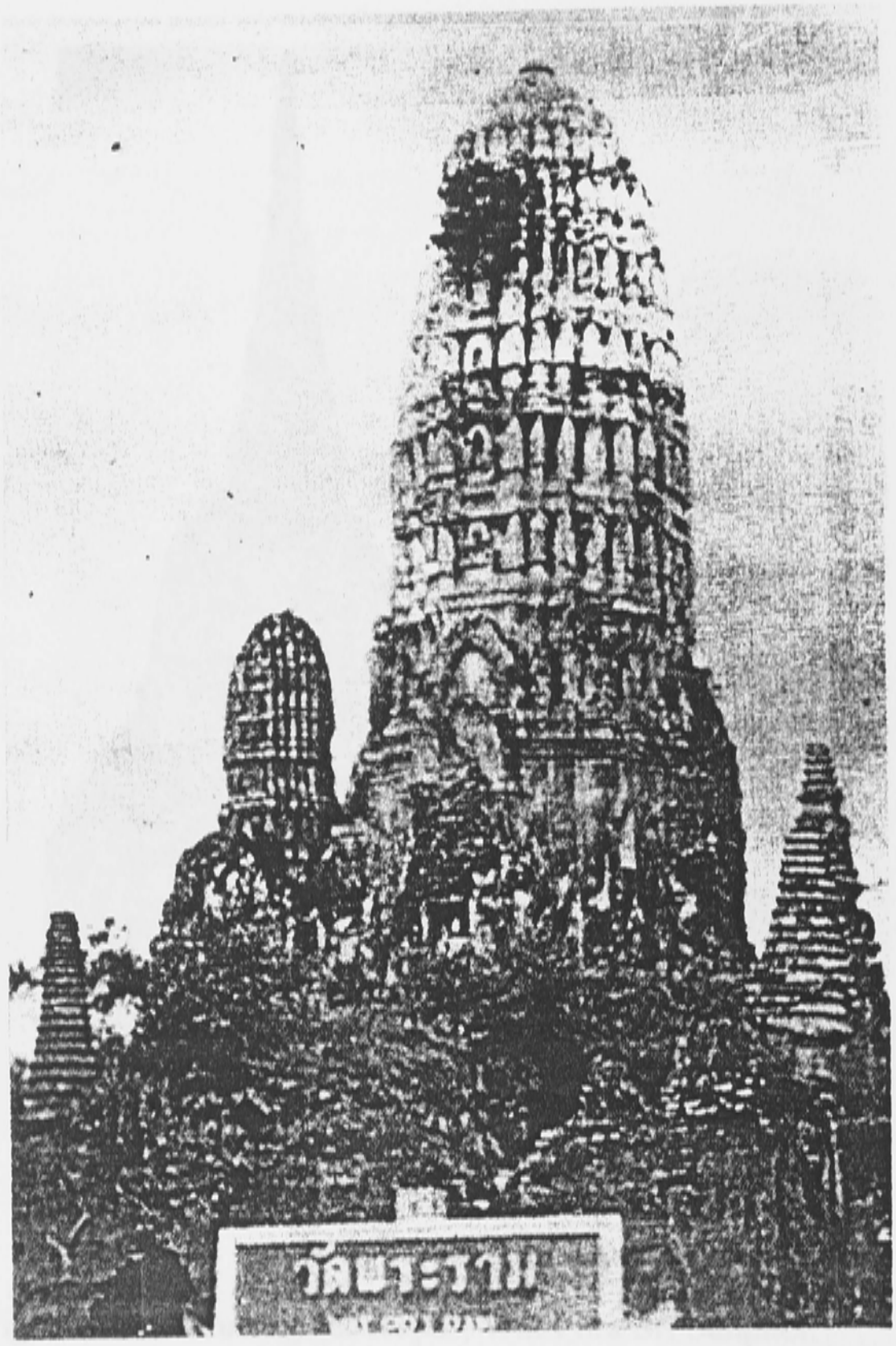

Fig. 3.4. The main *prang*, Wat Phra Ram, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

Fig. 3.5. The three great stupas, Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

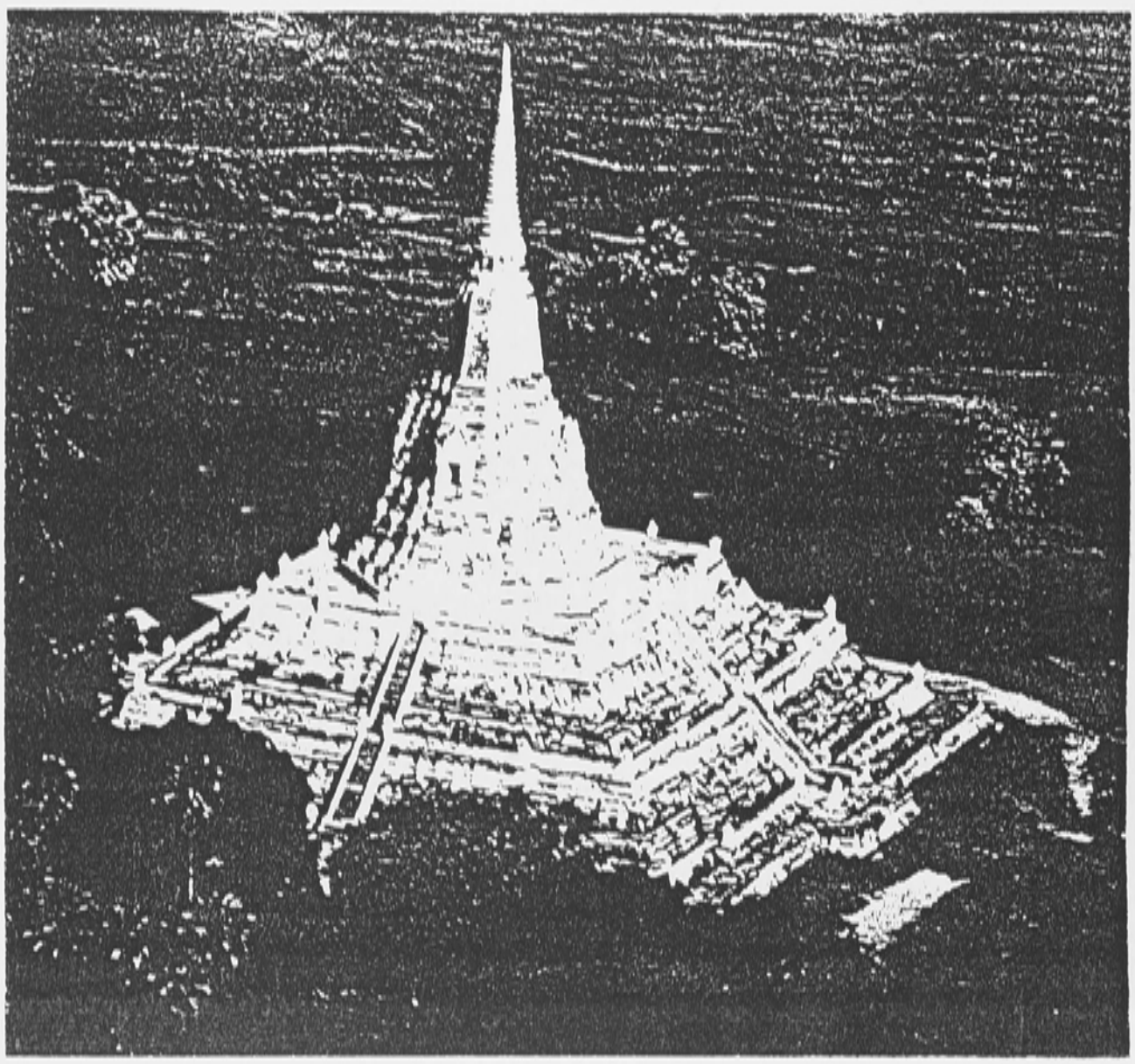

Fig. 3.6. The *chedi* Phukhao Thong, Wat Phukhao Thong, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

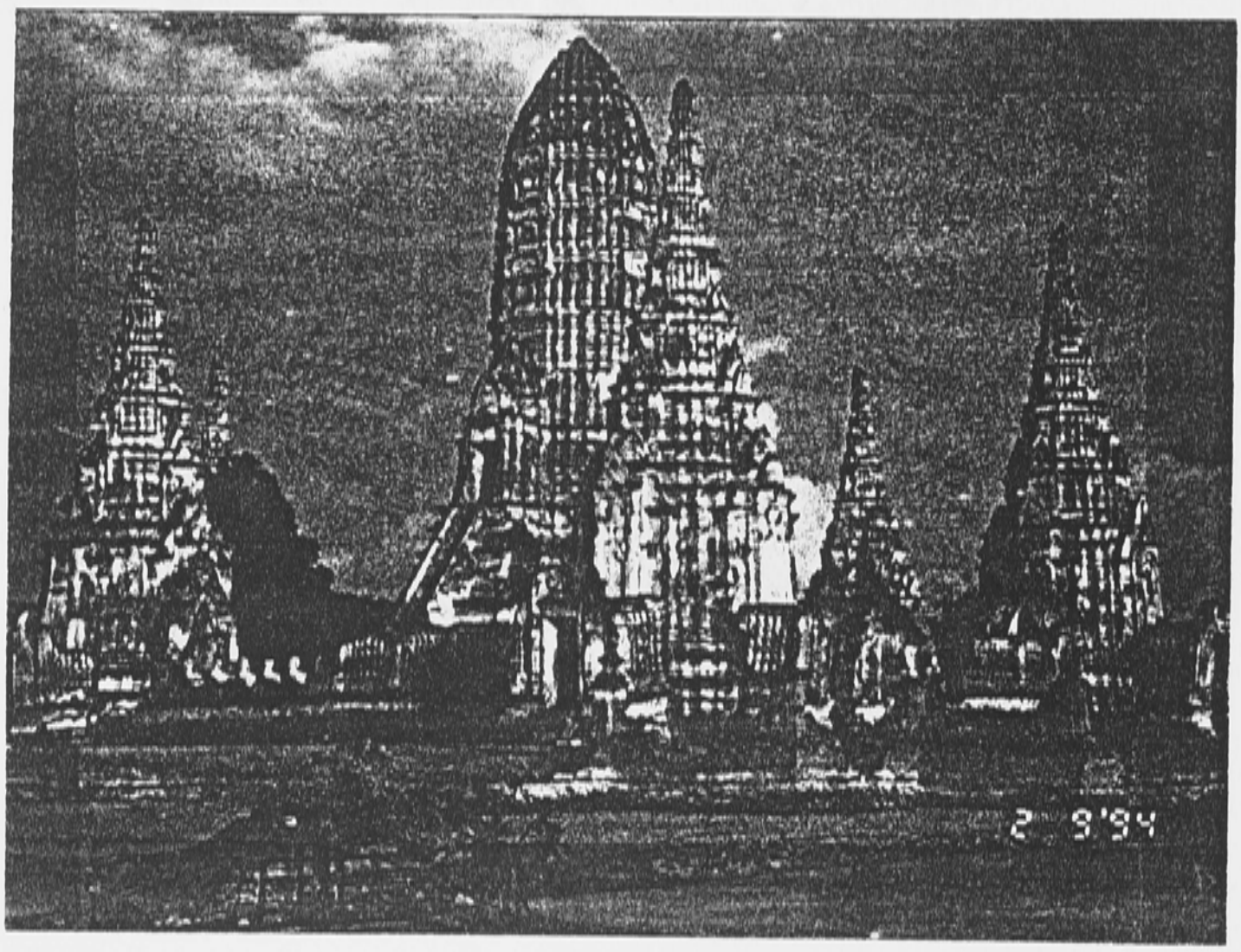

Fig. 3.7. Wat Chai Watthanaram, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

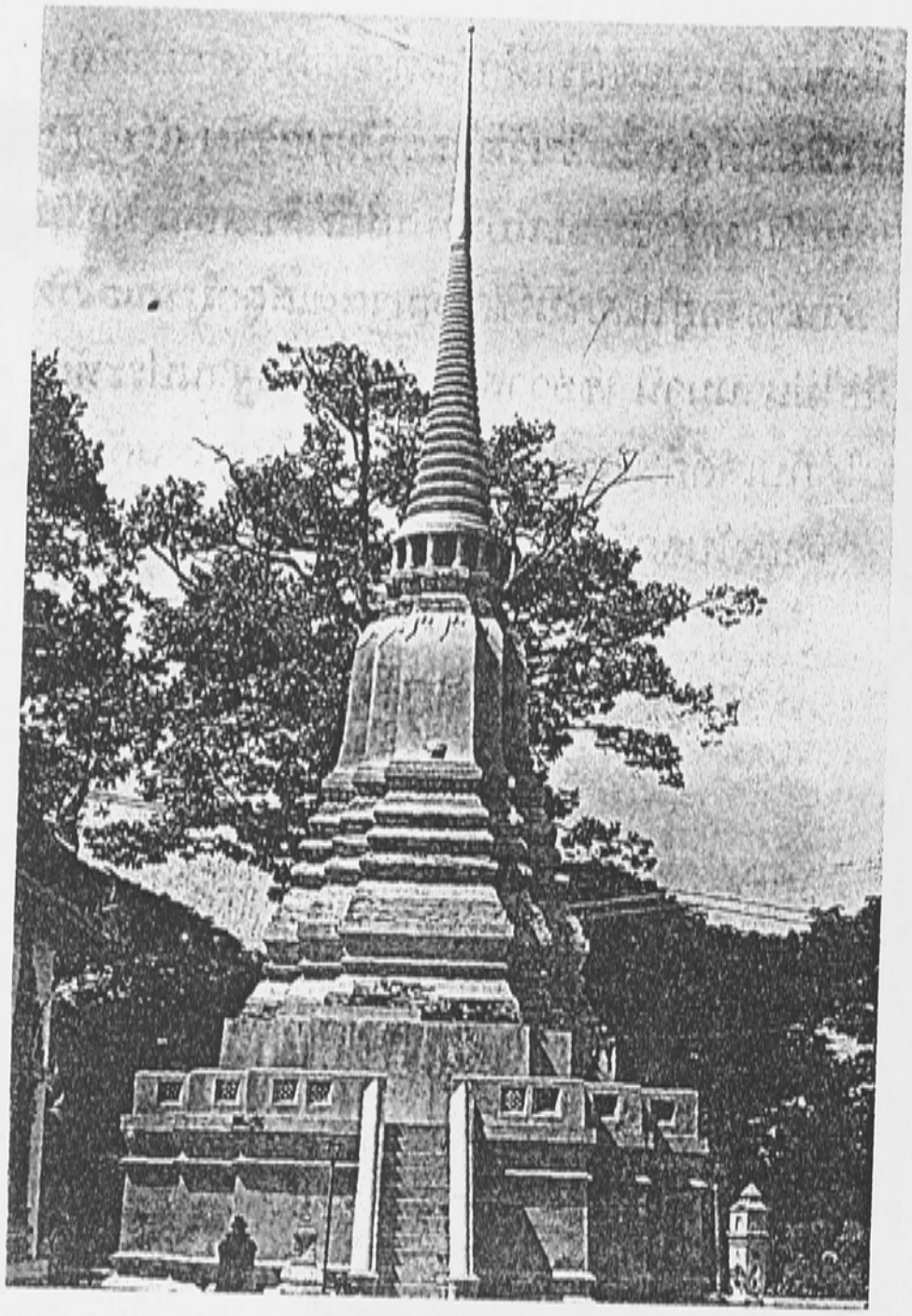

Fig. 3.8. The redented added-Angeld *chedi*, Wat Chumphon Nikayaram, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

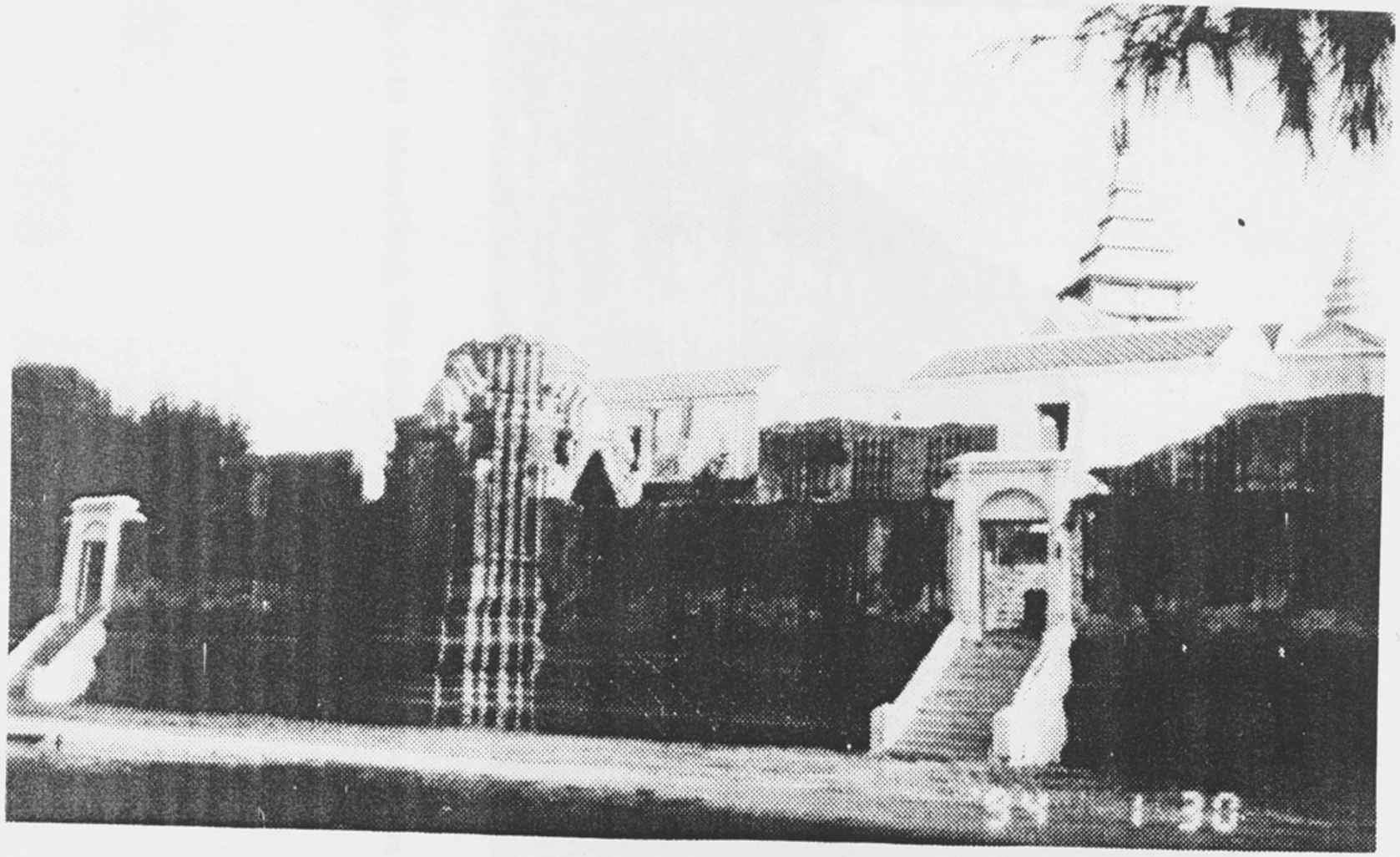

Fig. 3.9. Prasat Nakhon Luang, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

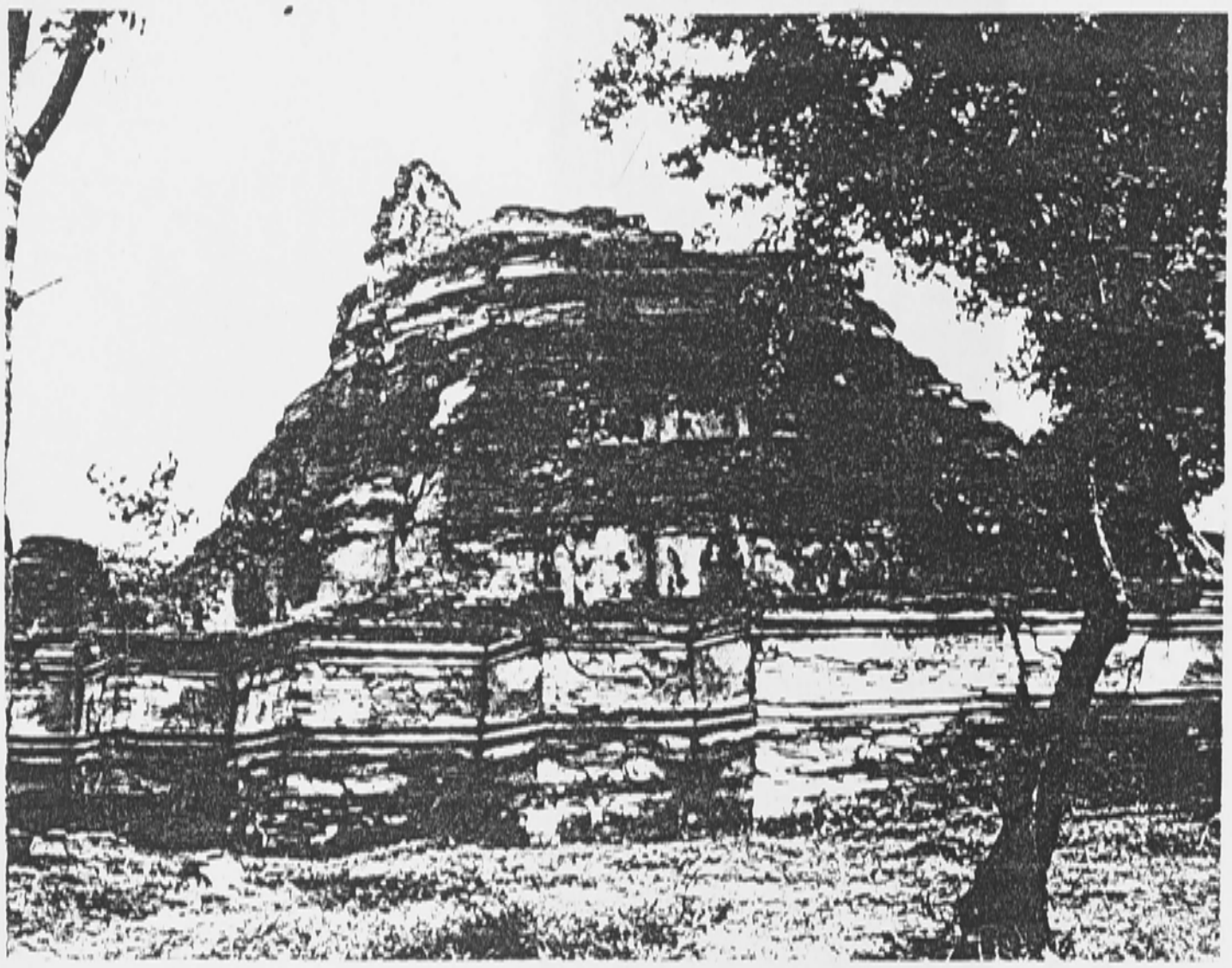

Fig. 3.10. Main *Chedi*, Wat Kudi Dao, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

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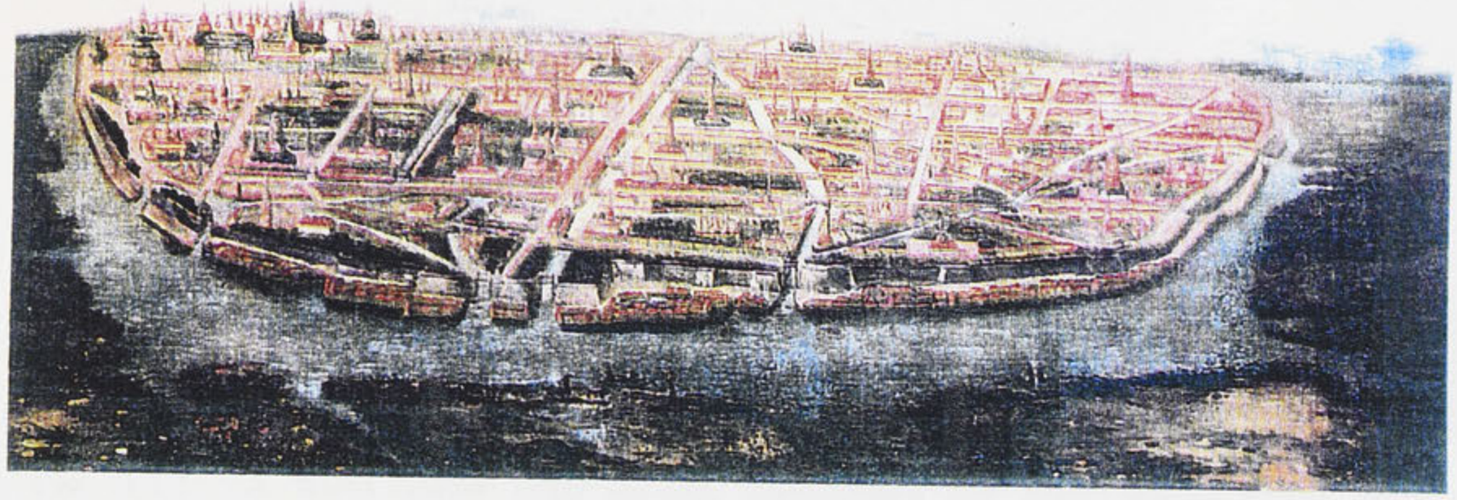

Fig. 3.11. 'Iudea,' oil on canvas, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Anonymous Dutch School, c.1650.

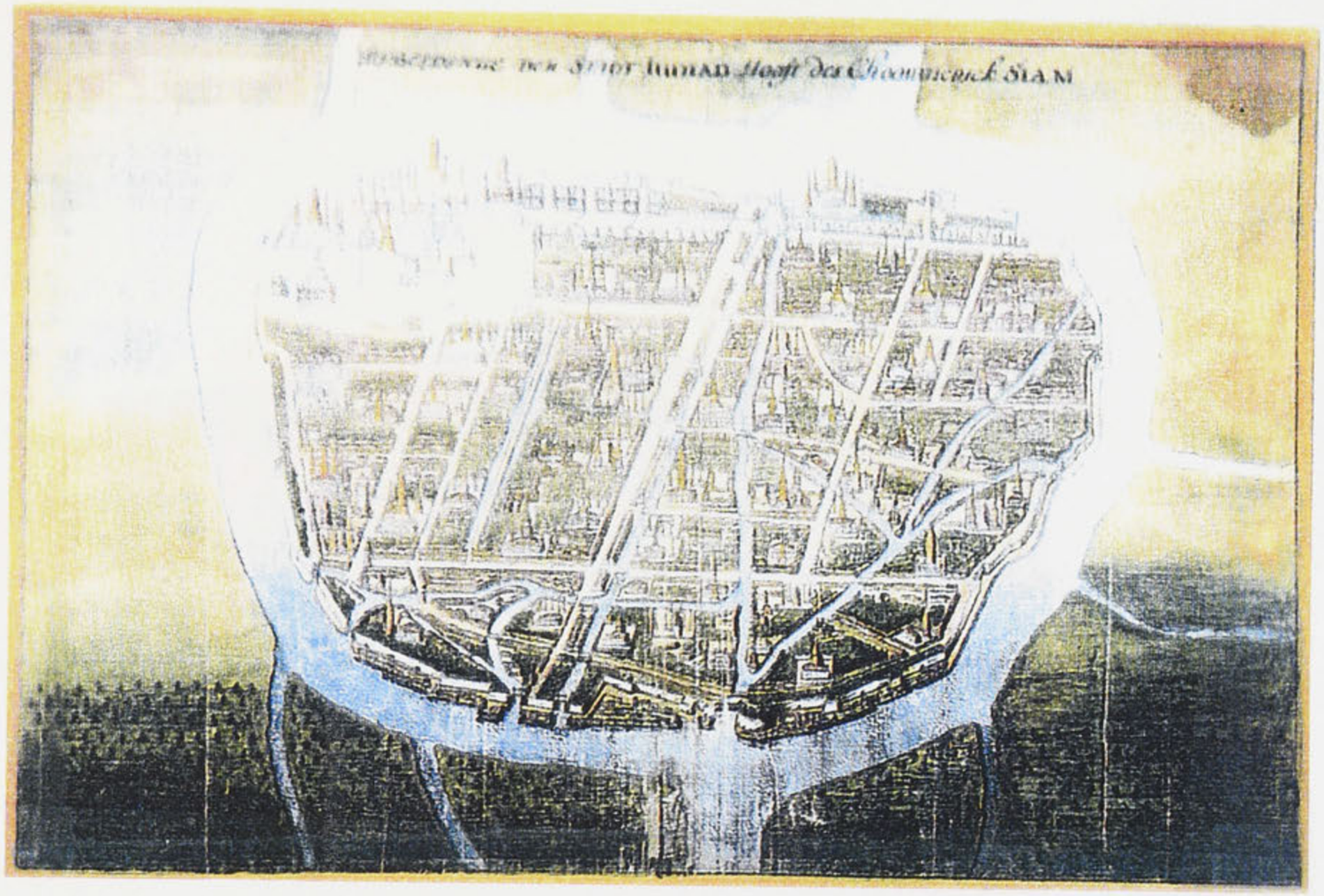

Fig. 3.12. A water-colour copy of the 'Afooldinge der Stadt Iudiad Hooft des Choonimcrik Siam' by Johannes Vingboons, Alemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague. C. 1665. Collection of the Siam Society.

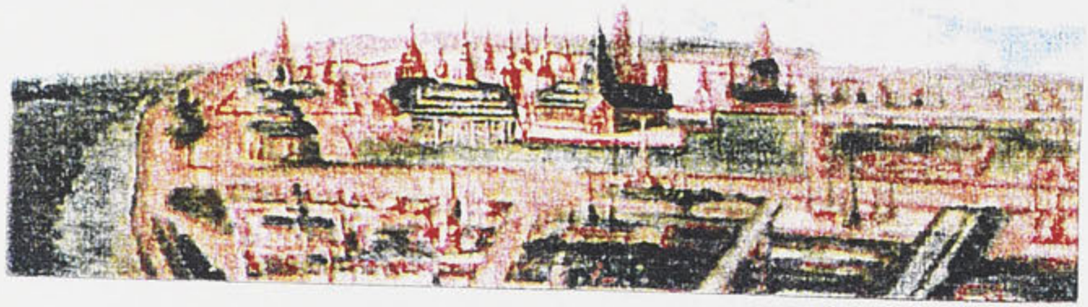

Fig. 3.13. Wat Phra Ram, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya. Detail from the painting 'Iudea', Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Anonymous Dutch School, c 1650.

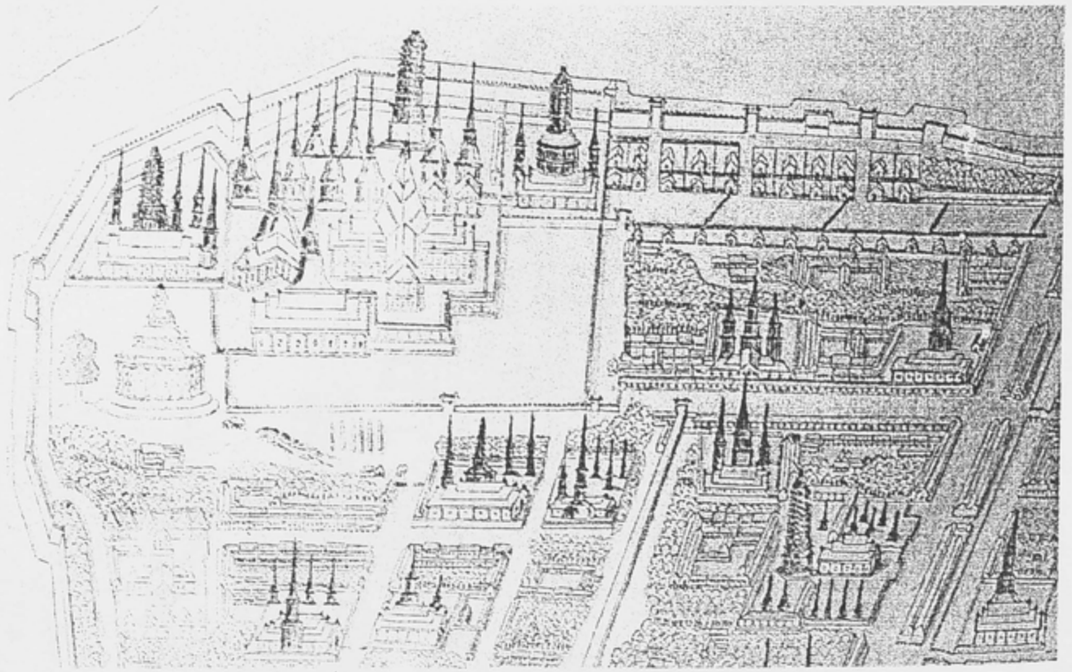

Fig. 3.14. Wat Phra Ram. Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya. Detail from a copy of the 'Afooldinge der Stadt Iudiad Hooft des Choonimcrik Siam' by Johannes Vingboons, Alemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague. C.1665. Collection of the Siam Society

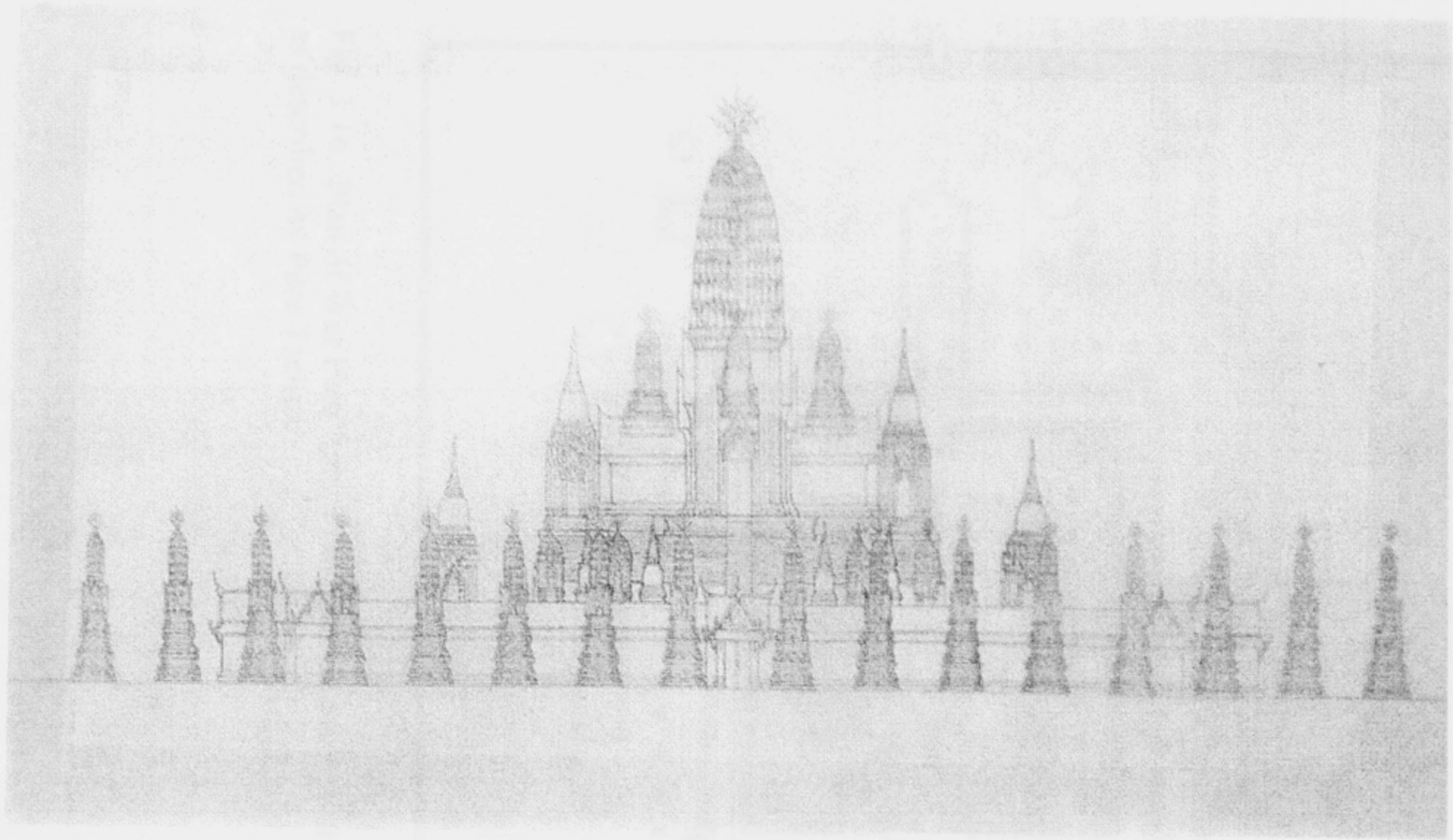

Fig. 3.15. Wat Phra Ram, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya as described by Pere Tachard.

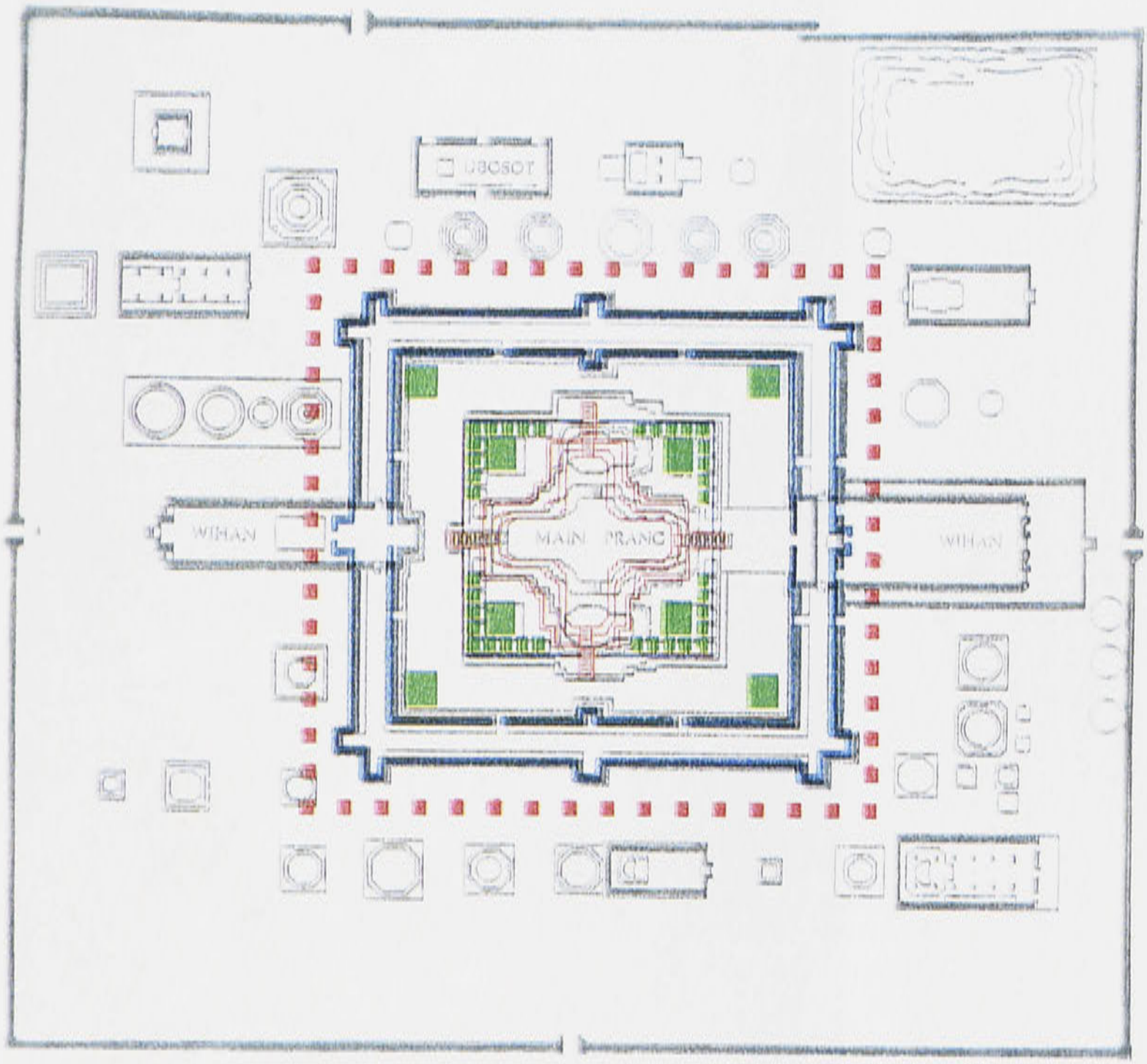

Fig. 3.16. Plan of Wat Phra Ram, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya as described by Père Tachard.

Fig. 3.17. The present-day Wat Phra Ram.

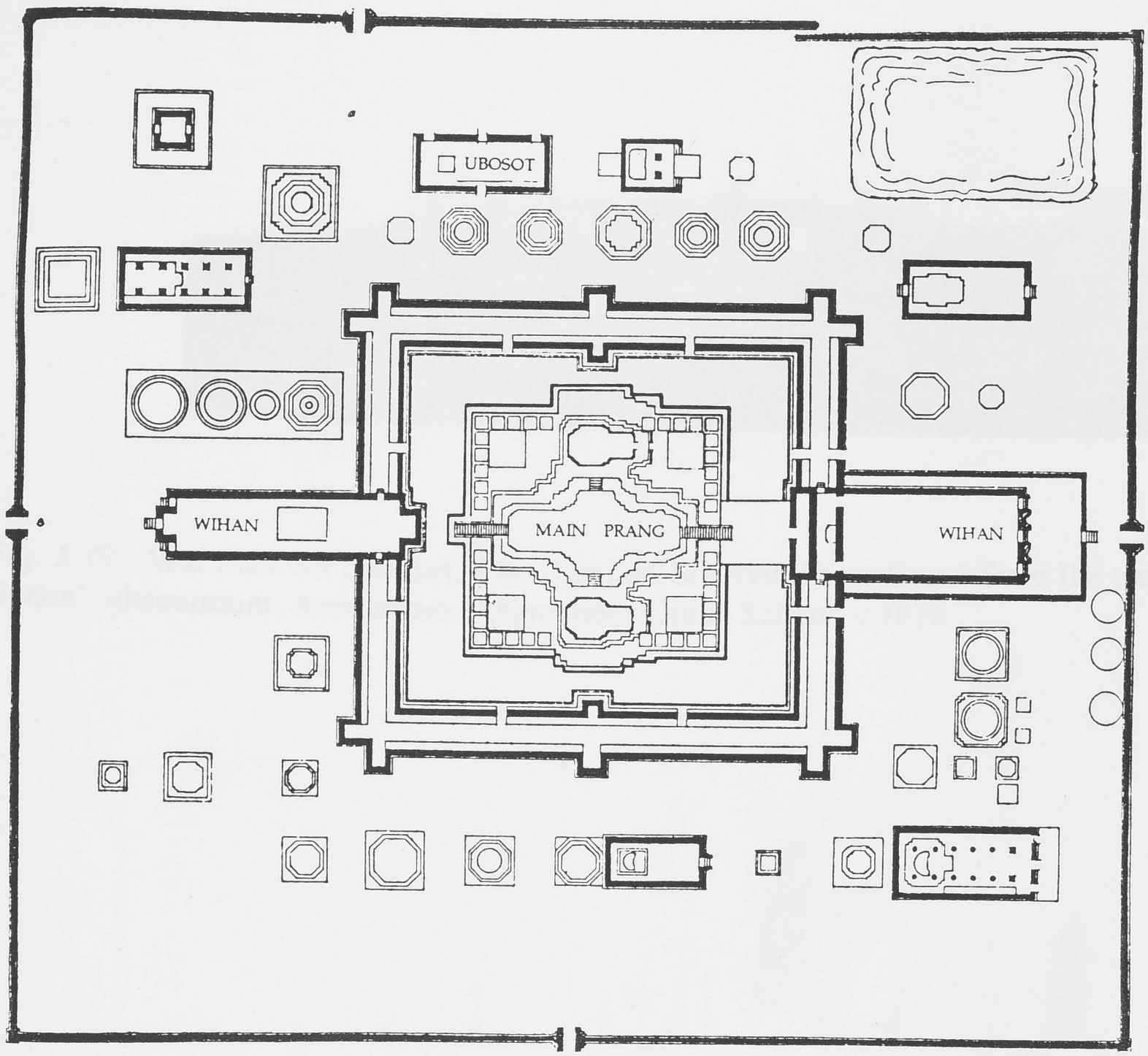

Fig. 3.18. Plan of the present-day Wat Phra Ram, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

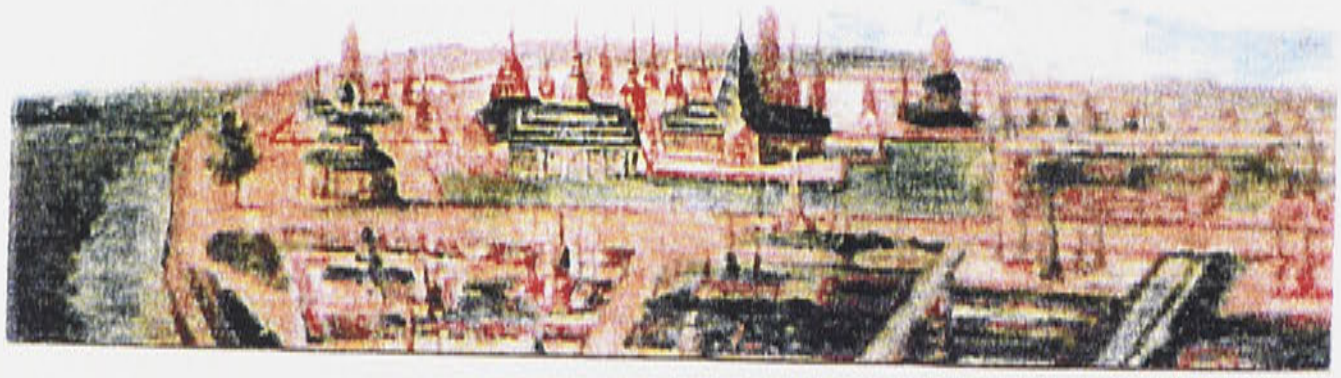

Fig. 3.19. Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya. Detail from the painting 'Iudea', ijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Anonymous Dutch School, c.1650.

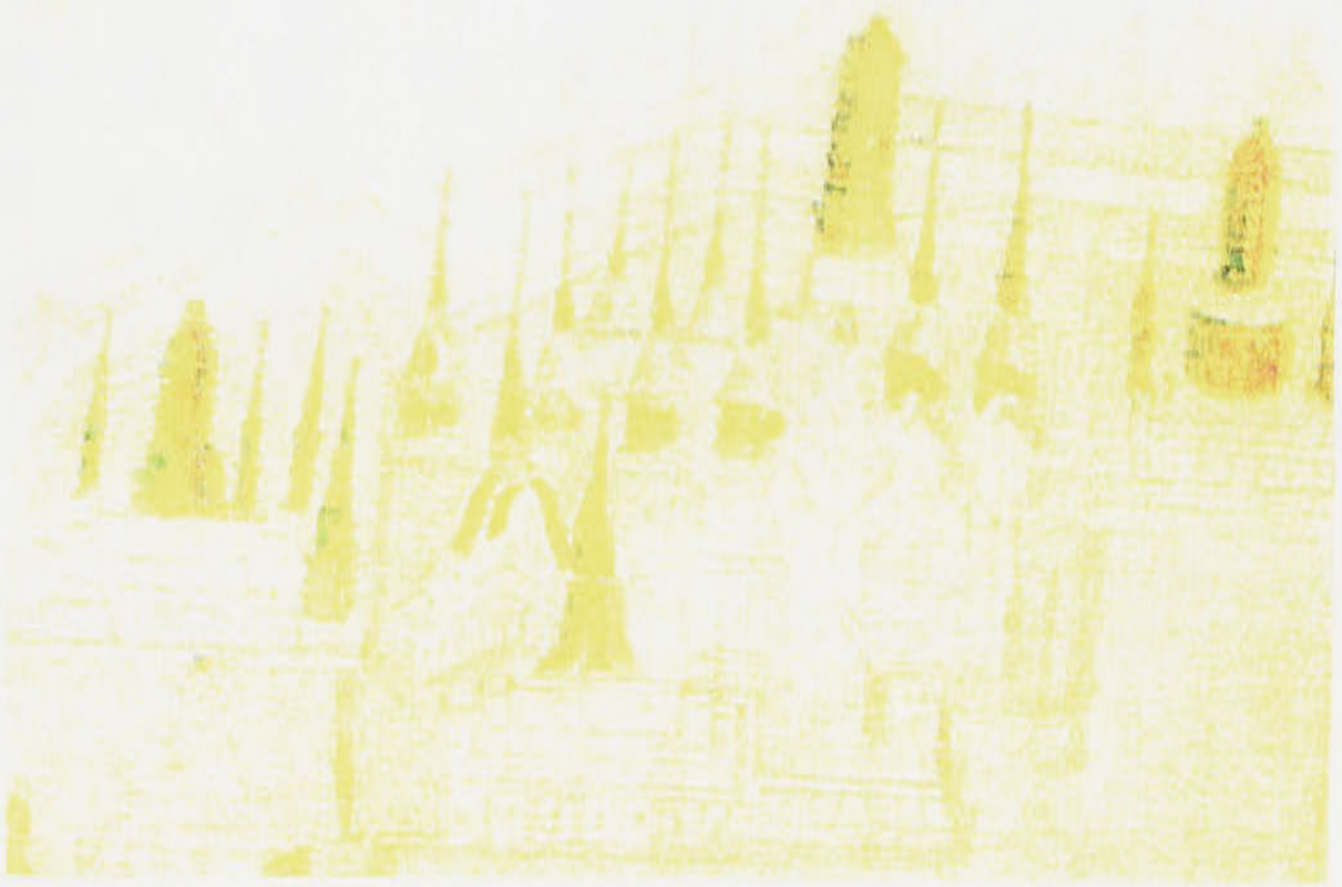

Fig. 3.20. Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya. Detail from a copy of the 'Afooldinge der Stadt Iudiad Hooft des Choonimcrik Siam' by Johannes Vingboons, Alemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague. C.1665. Collection of the Siam Society.

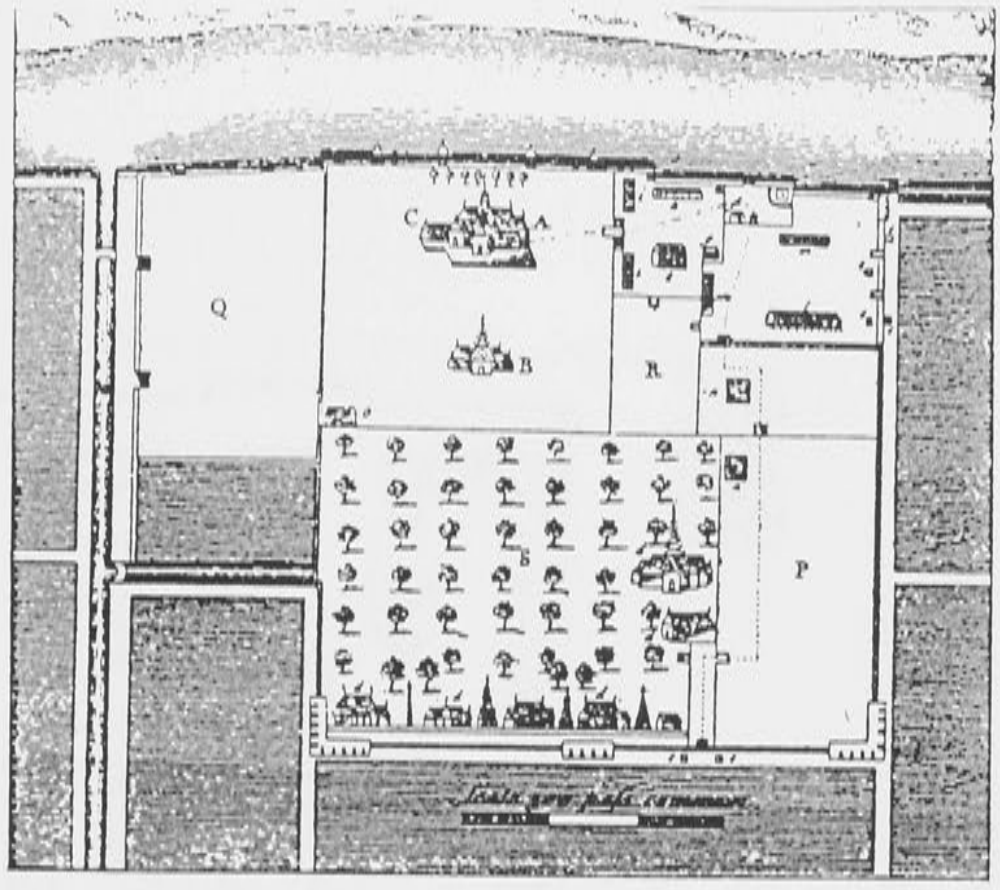

Fig. 3.21. Plan of the Royal Palace of Siam in Kaempfer's *A Description of the Kingdom of Siam, 1690.*

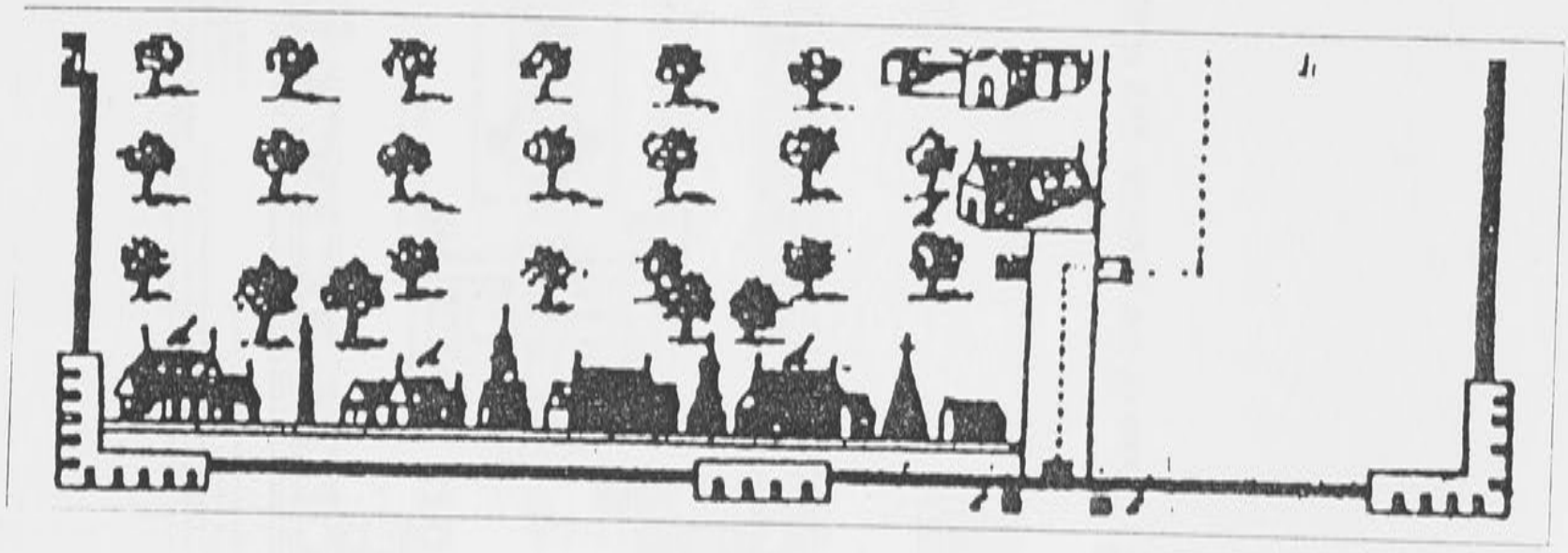

Fig. 3.22. Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya, from the Plan of the Royal Palace of Siam in Kaempfer's *A Description of the Kingdom of Siam, 1690.*

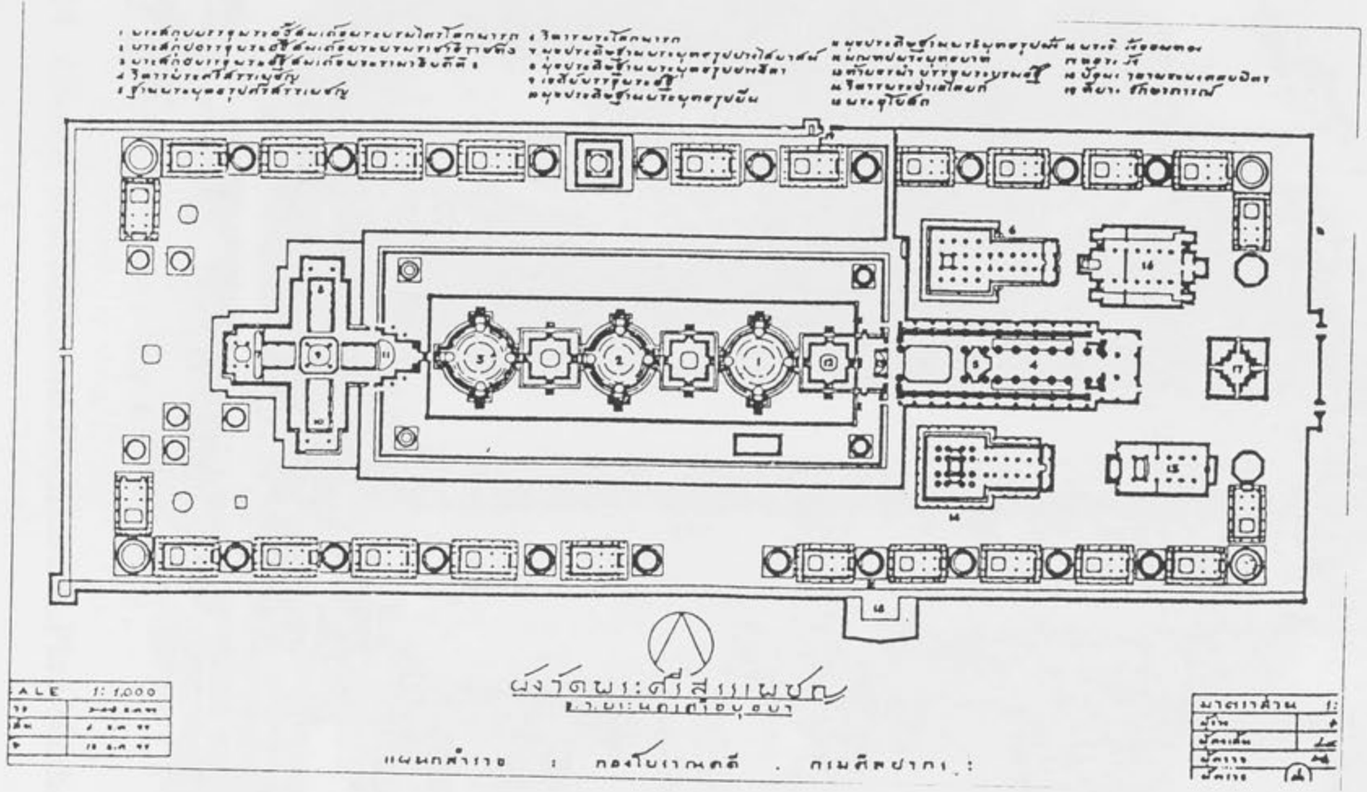

Fig. 3.23. Plan of the present-day Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

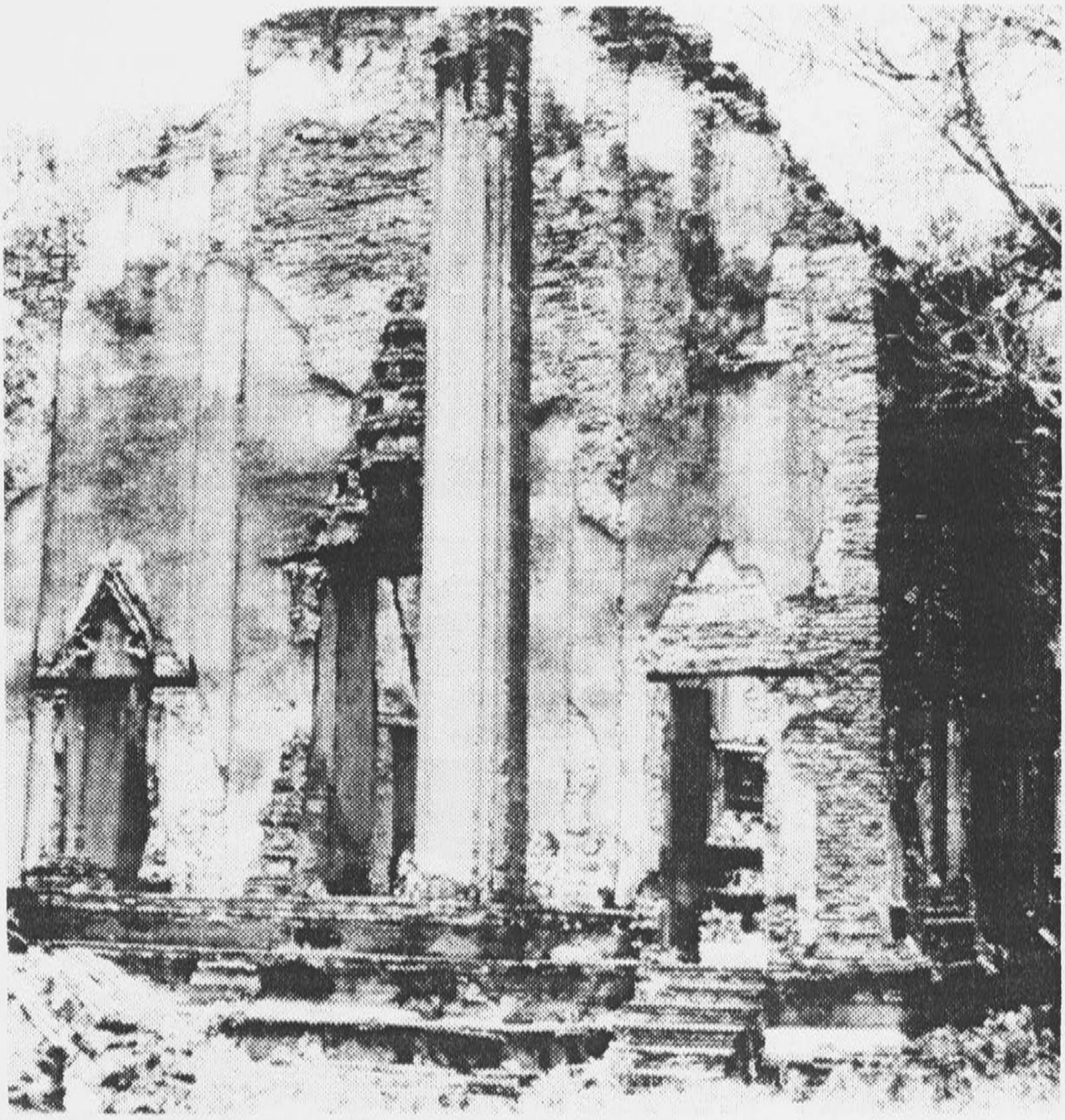

Fig. 3.24. *Ubosot*, Wat Boromma Phuttharam, Phra Nakhon sri Ayutthaya.

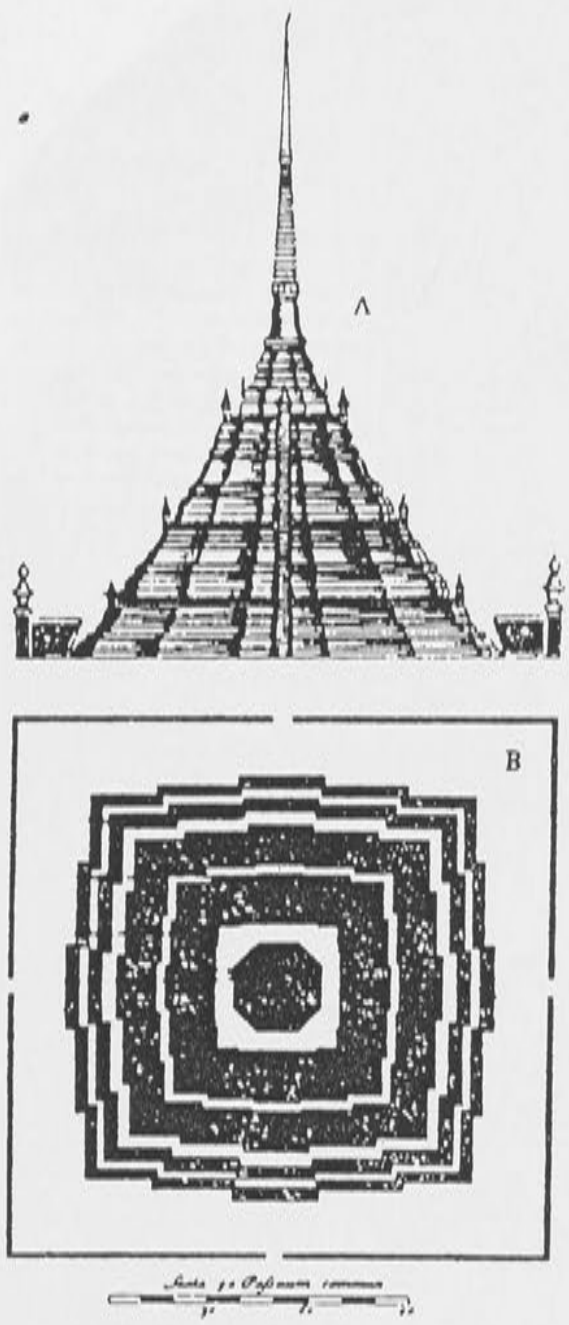

FIG. 13. A, The Pyramid Pukathon near Juthia. It was built in memory of a victory, which the Siamites obtained over the Peguans, and thereby recovered their liberty. B, The ground plot of the said Pyramid.

Fig. 3.25. Chedi Phukhao Thaong, Wat Phukhao Thong, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya, illustrated in Kaempfer's *A Description of the Kingdom of Siam, 1690.*

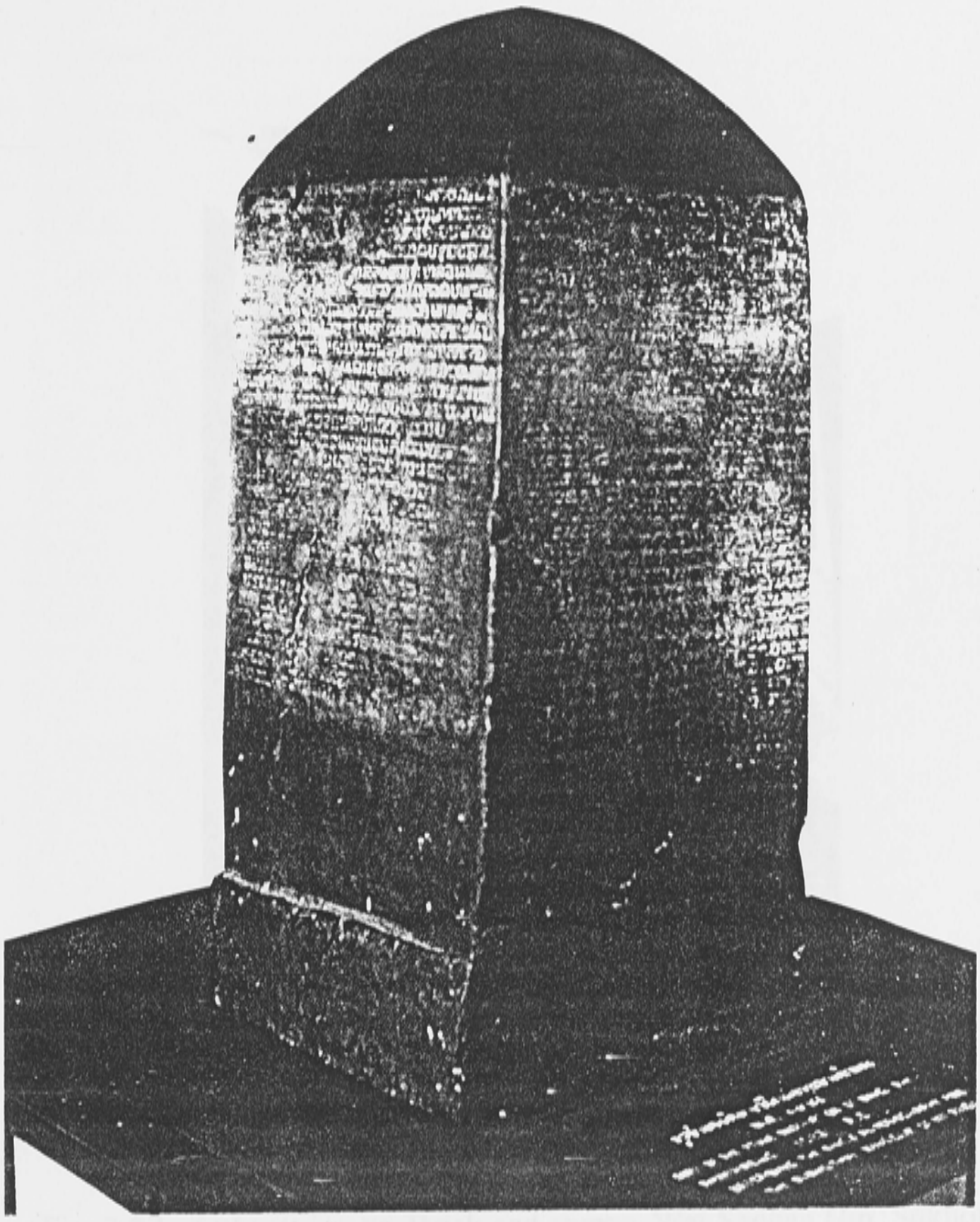

Fig. 3.26. The Ramkhamhaeng Inscription. Powder sand stone, Bangkok National Museum.

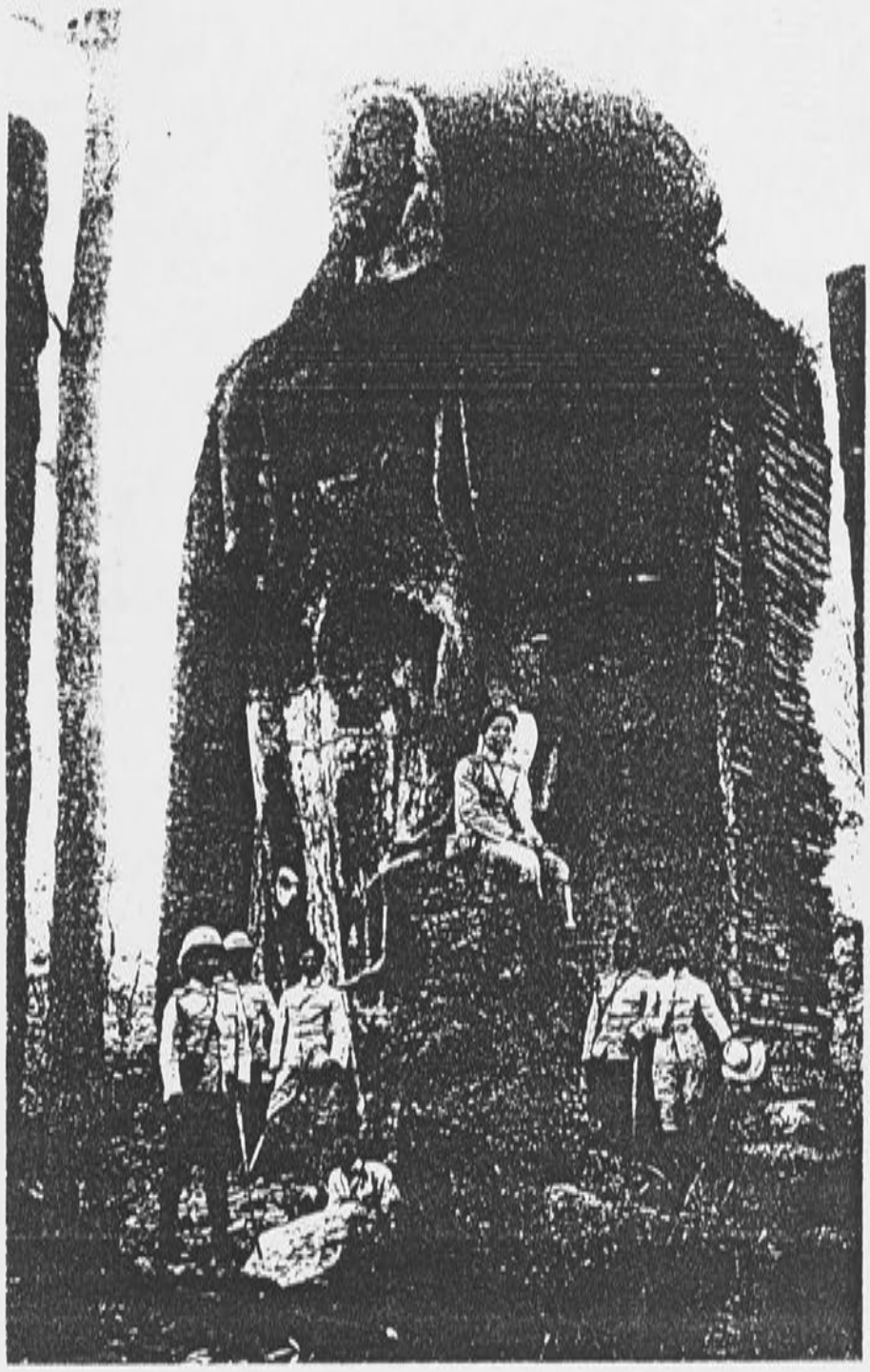

Fig. 3.27. Attharot image. Brick and stucco, Wat Saphan Hin, Sukhothai.

Fig. 3.28. Ajana image. Brick and stucco, Wat Sri Chum, Sukhothai.

Fig. 3.29. Attharot image. Brick and stucco, Wat Si Iriyabot, Kamphaengphet.

Fig. 3.30. Wat Traphang Thonglang, Sukhothai.

Fig. 3.31. The Buddha decending from the Tavatimsa Heaven. Stucco decoration, Wat Traphang Thonglang, Sukhothai. Photographed in the 1950s.

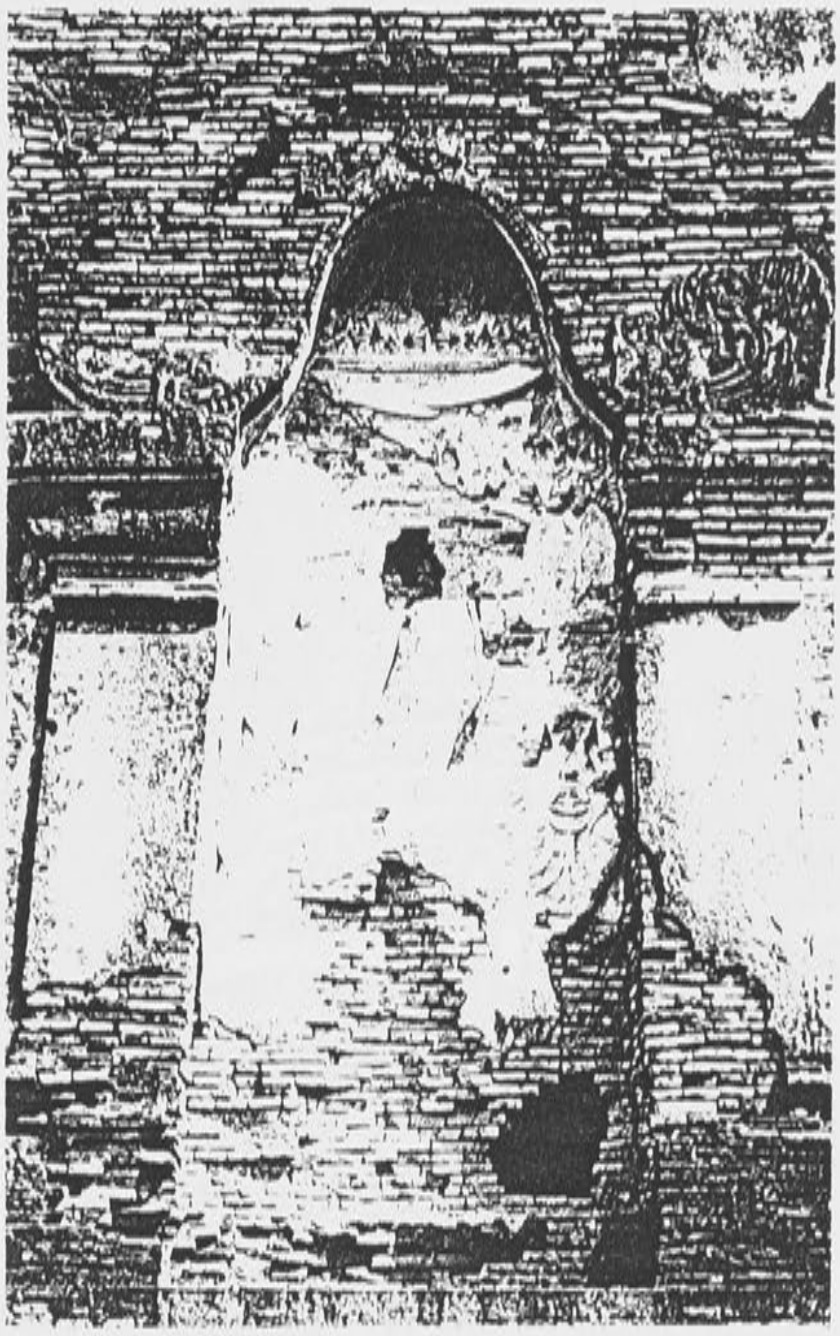

Fig. 3.32. The Buddha decending from the Tavatimsa Heaven. Stucco decoration, Wat Traphang Thonglang, Sukhothai. Recently photographed.

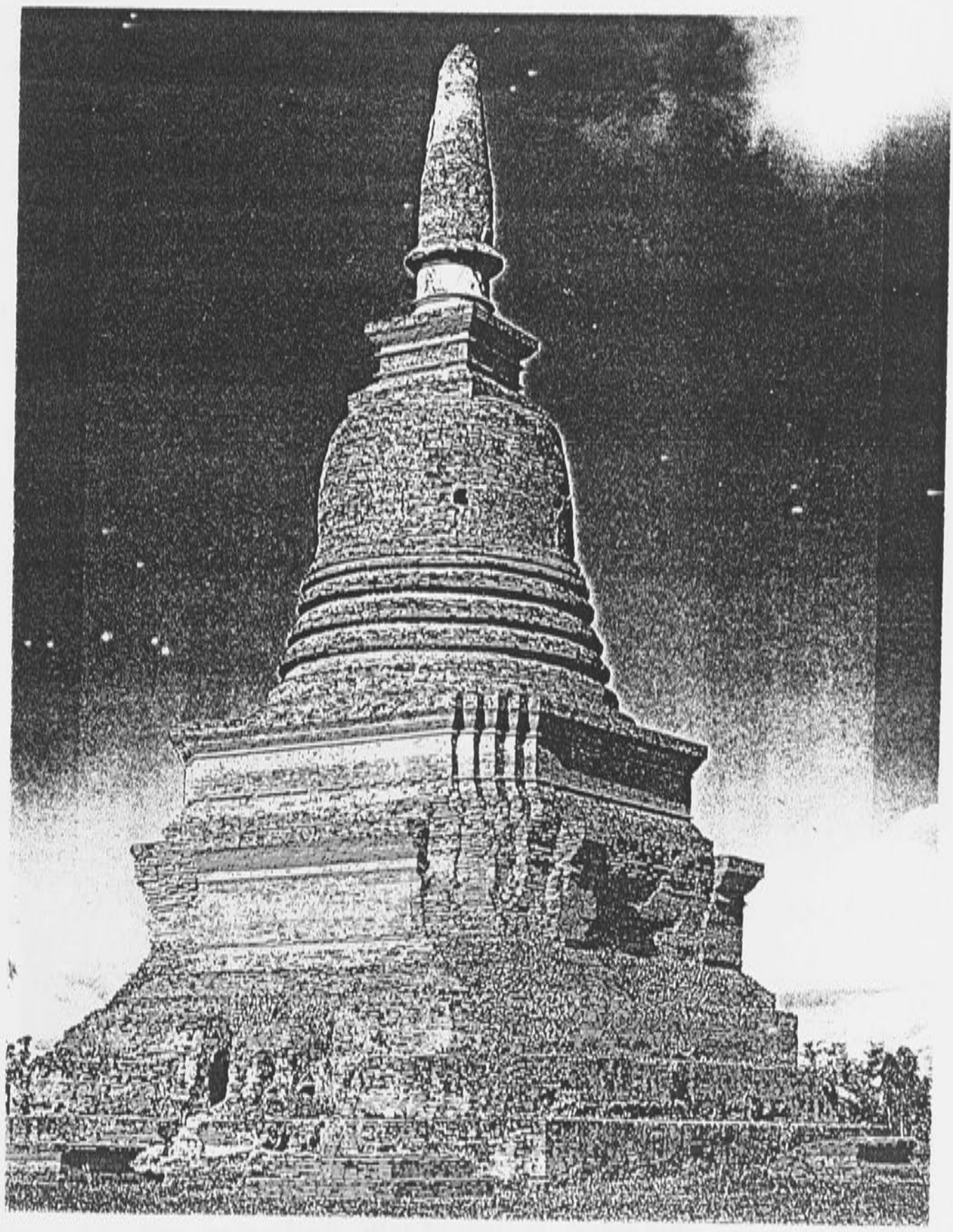

Fig. 3.33. The main *chedi*, Wat Sri Phichit Kirti Kalayaram (Wat Ta Ten Khung Nang), Sukhothai.

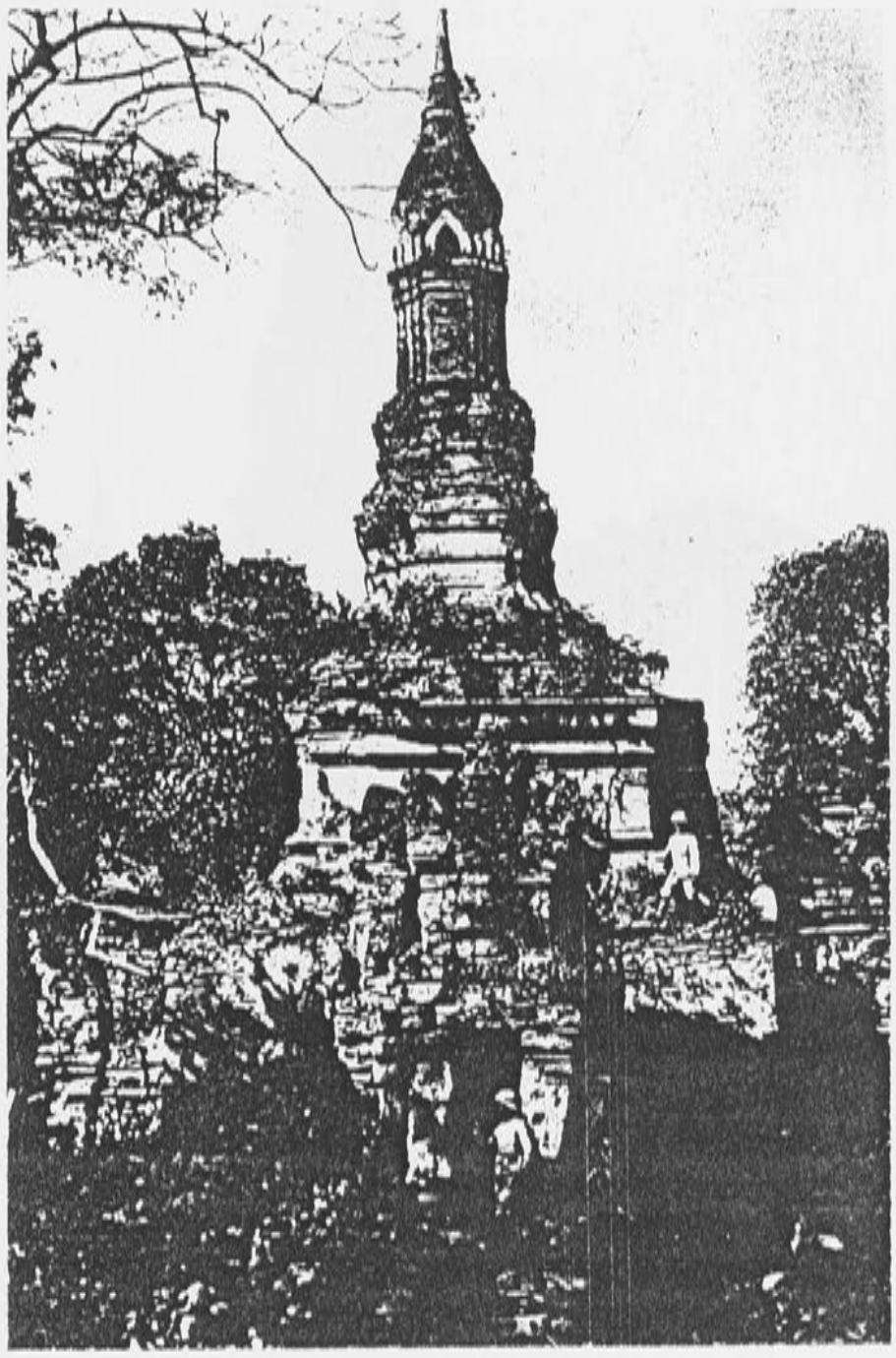

Fig. 3.34. The main *chedi*, Wat Mahathat, Sukhothai.

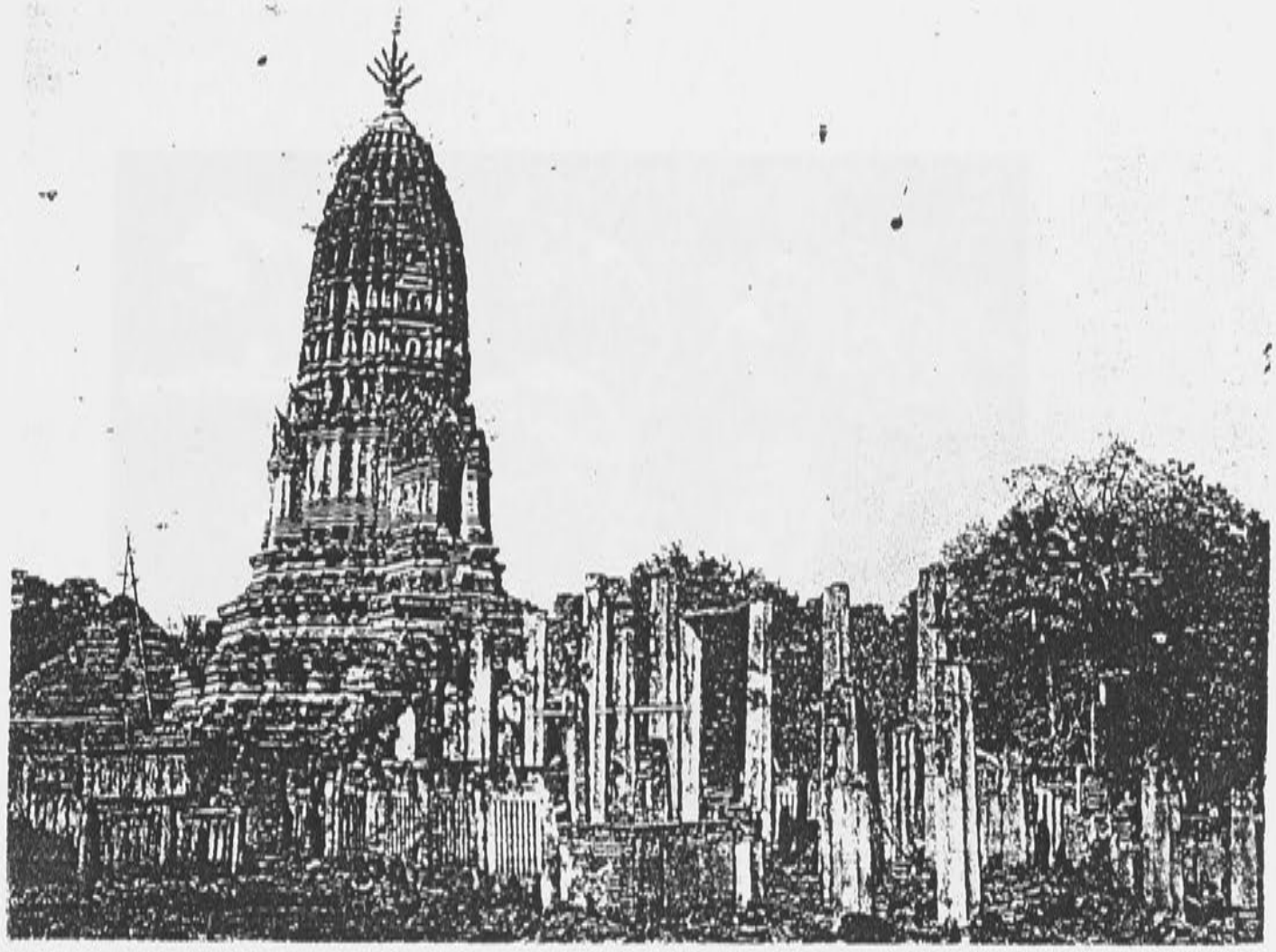

Fig. 3.35. The main *prang*, Wat Phra Sri Rattana Mahathat, Chaliang (Old Sawankhalok).

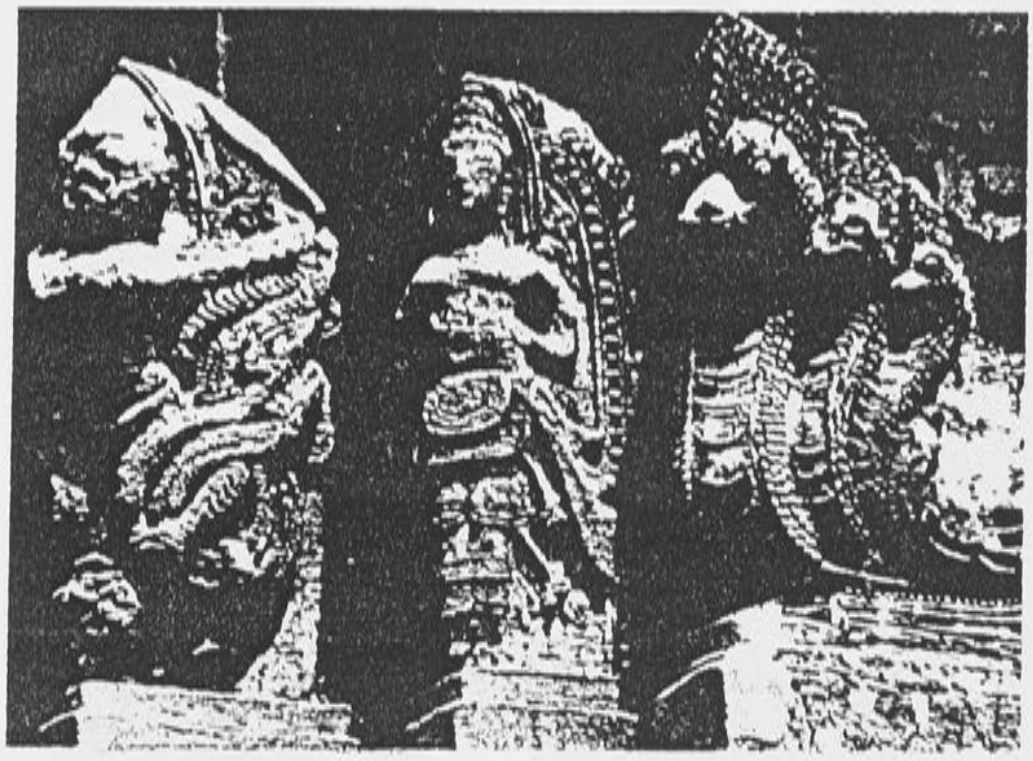

Fig. 3.36. Garuda, Angel and Naga. Stucco antifixes decoration, Wat Sri Sawai, Sukhothai.

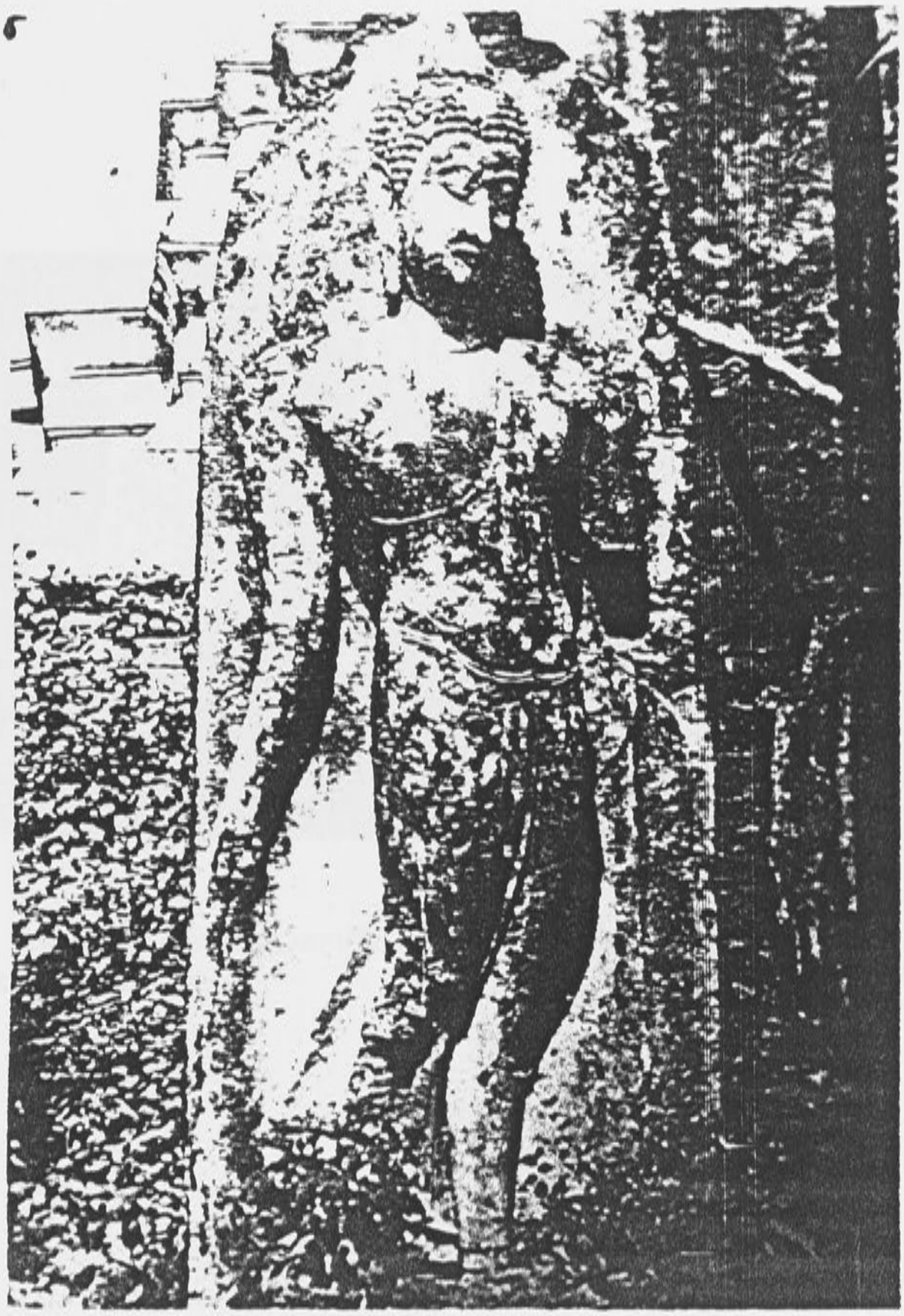

Fig. 3.37. Example of the Buddha image in the main group. Walking Buddha image. Stucco, Wat Phra Sri Rattana Mahathat, Chalieng (Old Sawankhalok)

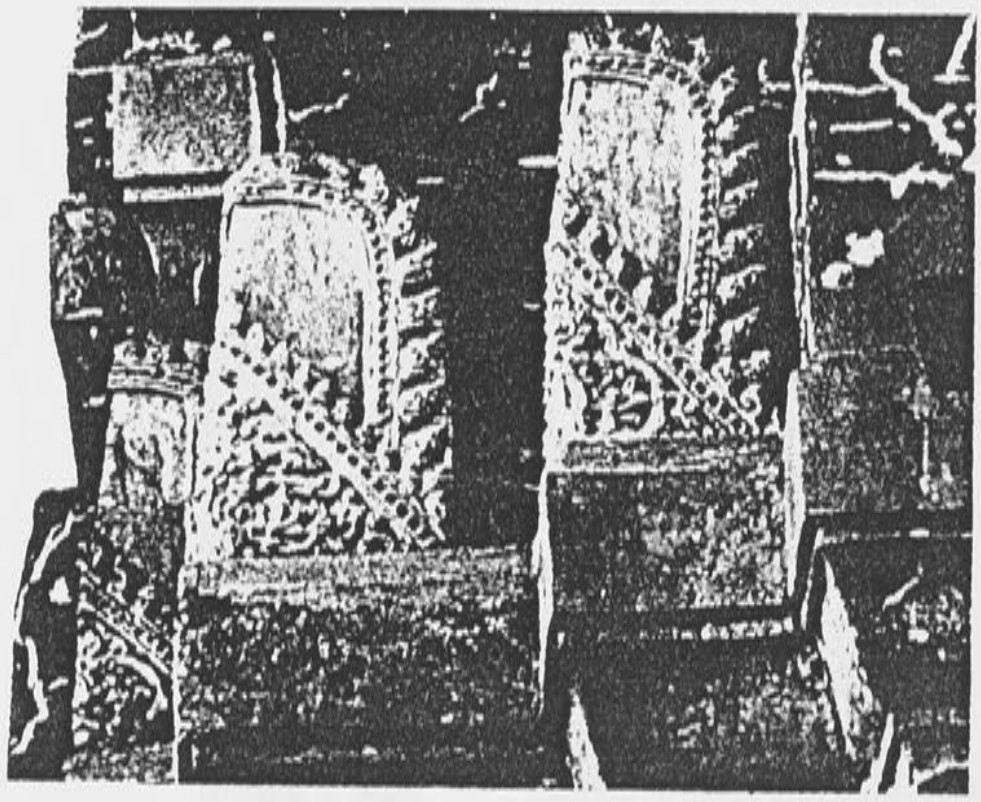

Fig. 3.38. Scroll and floweret motifs. Stucco antifixes decoration, Wat Sri Sawai, Sukhothai.

Fig. 3.39. Angel. Stucco antifixes decoration, Wat Sri Sawai, Sukhothai.

Fig. 3.40. Buddha's footprint, Wat Phrachao Ton Luang, Phayao.

Fig. 3.41. Angel. Stucco antifixes decoration, Wat Sri Sawai, Sukhothai.

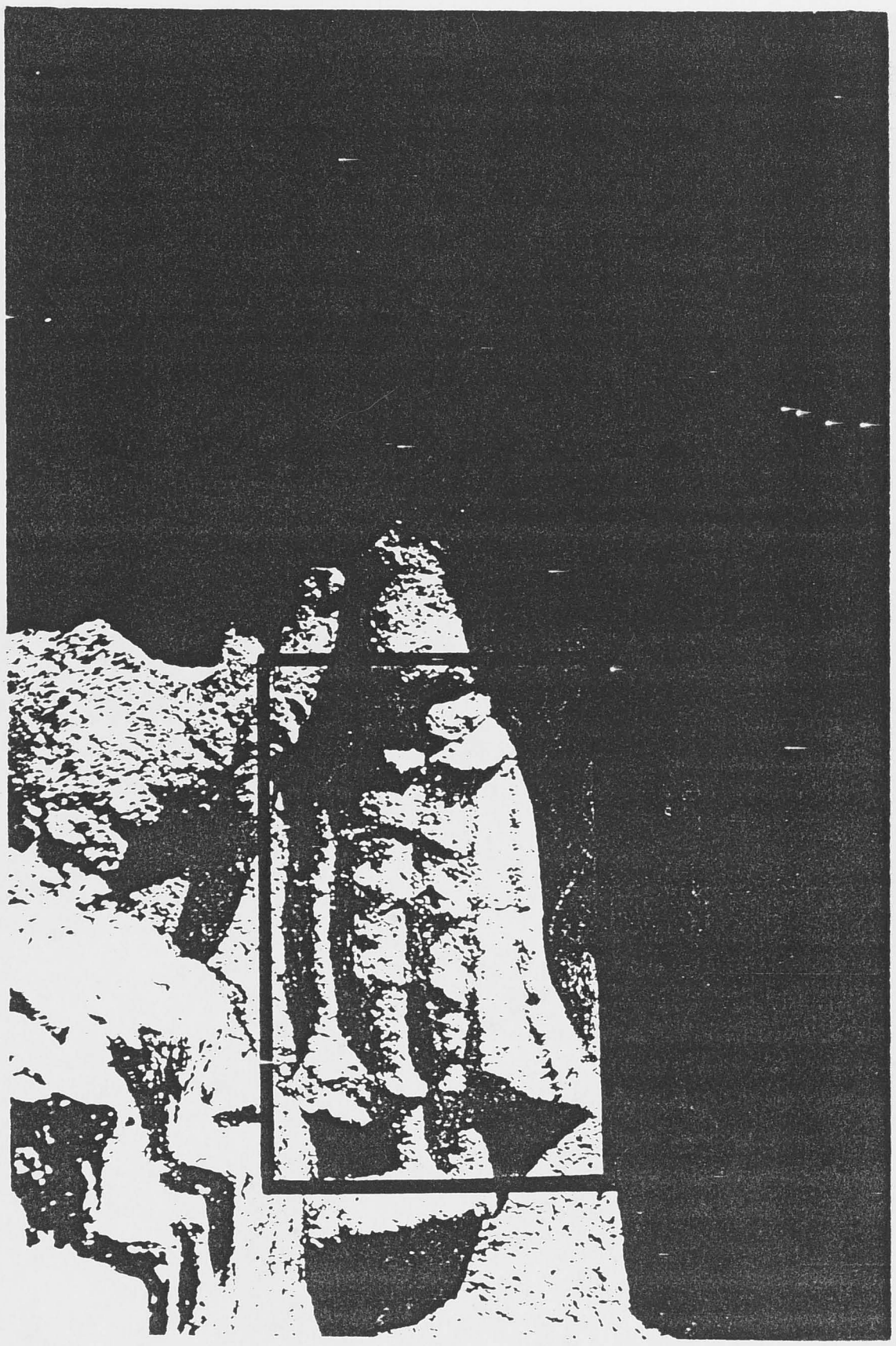

Fig. 3.42. Angel. Stucco antifixes decorating the five-spired *chedi*, Wat Mahathat, Sukhothai.

Fig. 3.43. *Singha*. Stucco antifixes decorating the five-spired *chedi*, Wat Mahathat, Sukhothai

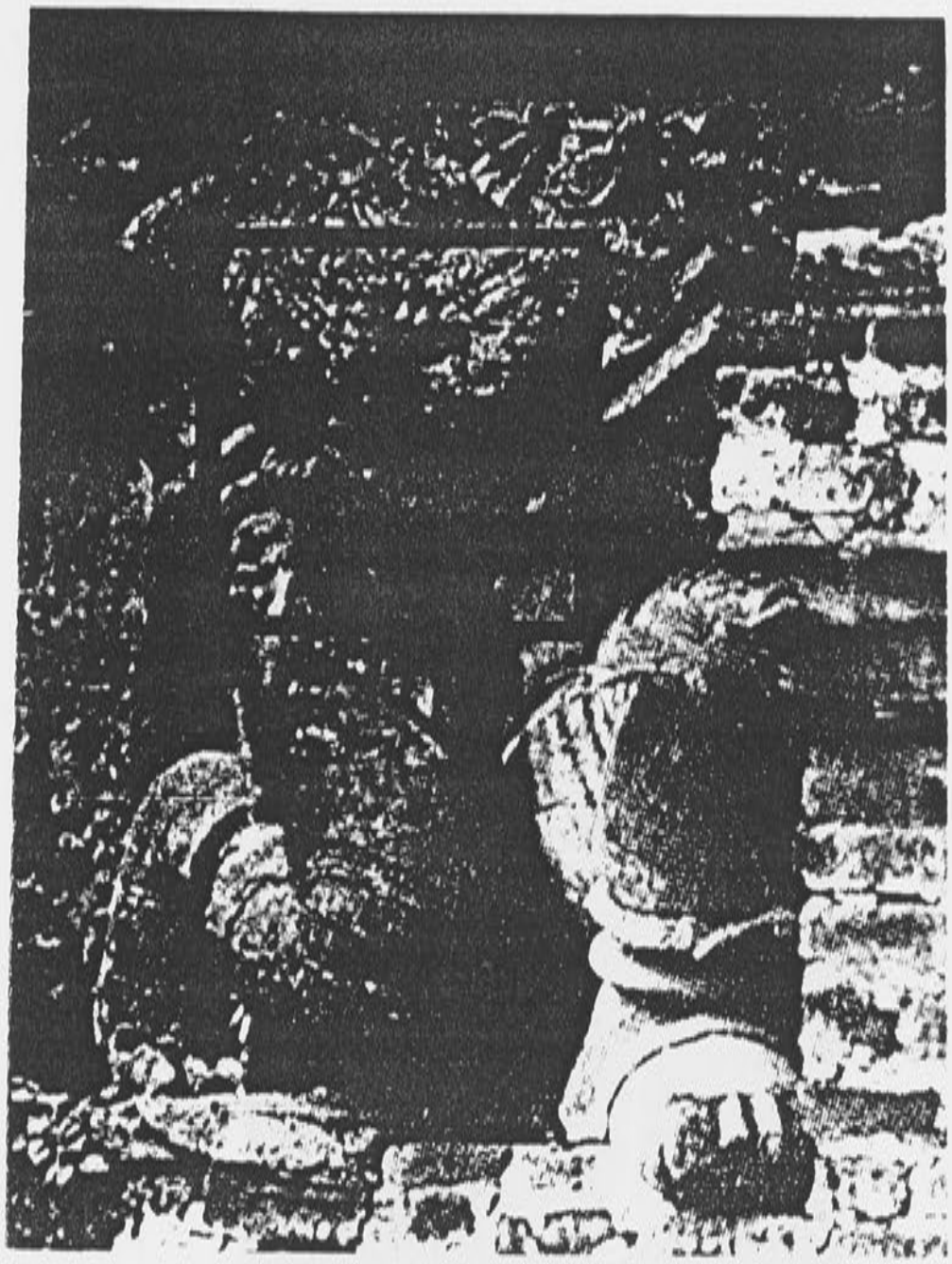

Fig. 3.44. *Yaksa*, Stucco decoration at the base of the main *prang*, Wat Ratchaburana, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

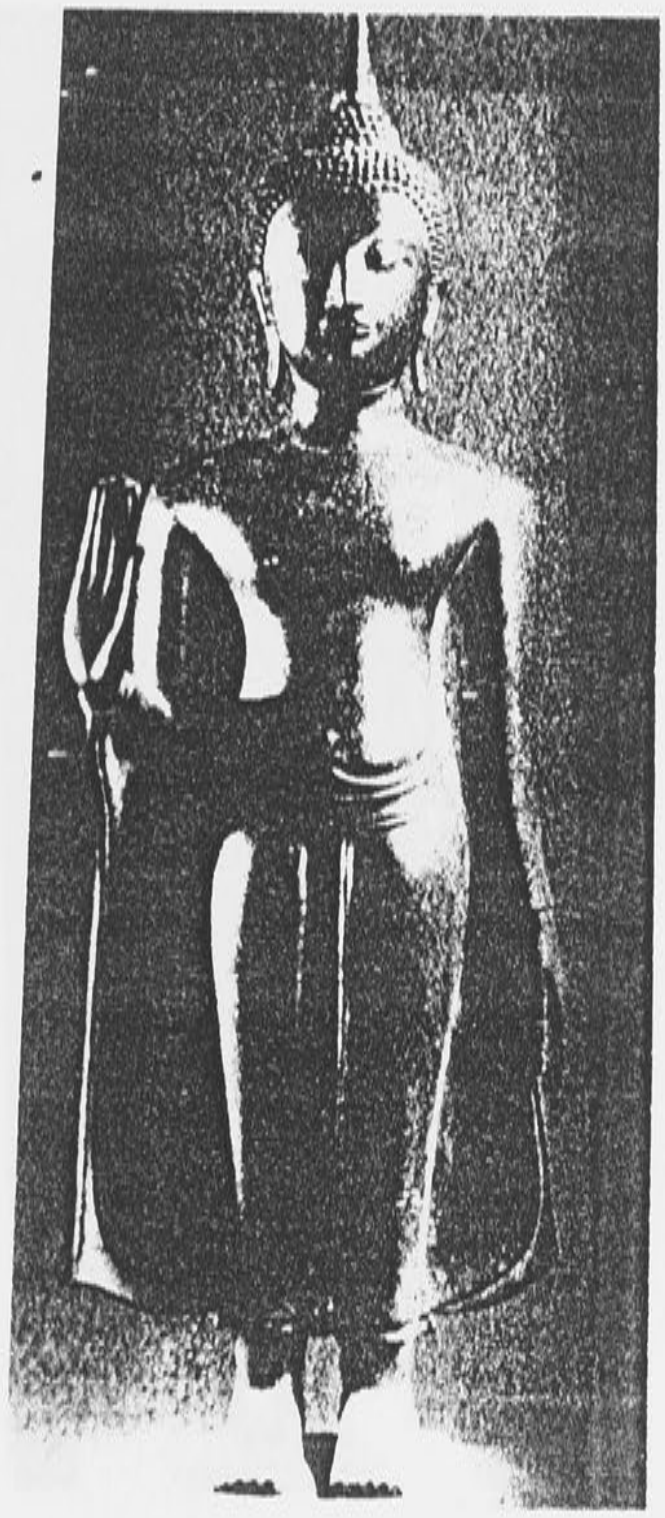

Fig. 3.45. Standing Buddha image (bronze), personal property. Early 16th century.

Fig. 3.46. Standing Buddha image. Bronze, from Wat Mahathat, Sukhothai. Ramkhamhaeng National Museum, Sukhothai. Late 13th century.

Fig. 3.47. The main *chedi*, Wat Sorasak, Sukhothai, after restoration.

Fig. 3.48. The ruins, Wat Sorasak, Sukhothai, before restoration.

Fig. 4.1. Example of Dvaravati period art. Standing Buddha image. Bronze, from Monthon Udon. Bangkok National Museum.

Fig. 4.2. Example of Srivijaya period art. Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. Bronze, from Chaiya, Surat Thani. Bangkok National Museum.

Fig. 4.3. Example of Lopburi period art. Buddha image. Sand stone, from Wat Mahathat, Lopburi. Bangkok National Museum.

Fig. 4.4. Example of Chiang Saen period-early type art. Buddha image. Brass, given by King Prachathipok. Bangkok National Museum.

Fig. 4.5. Example of Sukhothai period art Buddha image. Brass, given by King Prachathipok. Bangkok National Museum.

Fig. 4.6. Example of Chiang Saen period-later type art. Buddha image. Bronze. Wat Benchamabophit, Bangkok.

Fig. 4.7. Example of U-Thong period art. Buddha image. Bronze. Bangkok National Museum.

Fig. 4.8. Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. Sand stone, from Wat Sala Tung, Chaiya, Surat Thani. Bangkok National Museum.

Fig. 4.9. Bodhisattva Patthamapani. Bronze, from Ban Kradang Nga, Sathing Phra District, Songkhla. Matchimawas National Museum, Songkhla.

Fig. 4.10 Image of Buddha subduing *mara*. Bronze.
Chaiya National Museum, Surat Thani.

Fig. 4.11. Walking Buddha image. Bronze, from the crypt of the main prang, Wat Ratchaburana, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.
Chao Sam Phraya National Museum, Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

Fig. 4.12. Buddha image. Bronze, from Su Ngai Kolok, Nara Thiwat. Bangkok National Museum.

Appendix A Historical record used in dating Ayutthaya architecture

1. *The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, Luang Prasoet version*, according to it own exordium, it is said to have been compiled during the reign of King Narai in 1680. However, it was discovered in 1907 by Luang Prasoet Aksoranit (Phraratcha pongsawadan Krung Kao chabab Luang Prasoet Aksoranit 1972, 441).

Regarding the credibility of this Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, Prince Damrong suggested that '...Vajirayan [National] library committee concluded that, after examining handwritings and styles, this Chronicle of Ayutthaya was an old one. There is no reason to suspect that it was tampered (Ibid., 442).

Piriya, however, made the observation that '...at least two incidents mentioned in the 'Luang Presoet version' show that the compiler was out of touch with contemporary thinking regarding these particular events, which we know from the accounts of a 17th century Western visitor of Ayutthaya' (Piriya 1992a, 39). He therefore questions which version of the royal chronicle of Ayutthaya was written by the order of King Narai as is believed.

2. *The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, British Museum version* or *Phraratcha phongsawadan Krung Sayam*. *Phraratcha phongsawadan Krung Sayam* is the property of the British Museum, London, given by J. Hurst Hayes Esq. in 1948. It was later found by Khachon Sukhaphanitch in 1957. He then made a copy from the microfilm and brought it back to Thailand. However, the microfilm from which it was copied might not be the original, but a copied one (Phraratcha phongsawadan Krung Sayam 1964, i).

3. *The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*, according to its own exordium, it is said that this royal chronicle of Ayutthaya had been compiled during the reign of King Yod Fa of the Chakri dynasty (Phraratcha phongsawadan Krungsri Ayutthaya 1964, 1). It was discovered in 1910 (Somkiat 1984, 34).

4. *The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, the two volume printed edition or Somdet Phra Phonnarat Wat Phra Chetuphon version or Dr. Bradley version.* This was a recension of the British Museum version complied in the reign of King Nangklao (Piriya 1992a, 39).

5. *Culayuddhakaravamsa*, a Pali work written by Somdet Phra Phonnarat of Wat Phra Chetuphon (1735-1814) (Ibid.).

6. *Sangitiyavamsa*, another Pali work compiled by Somdet Phra Phonnarat Wat Phra Chetuphon in 1789 (Ibid.).

7. *The Abridged Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya*, compiled by Somdet Krom Phra Paramanuchit in 1840 (Ibid.).

8. *The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, the Chakkraphatphong (Chad) version.* It was discovered in 1908 (Ibid.). Its content is quite similar to that of the *Dr. Bradley version*, except the story during the late King Narai's reign onwards (Phraratcha phongsawadan Krung Sri Ayutthaya 1964, iii-v).

9. *The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya, Royal Autograph Version*. This version of the Ayutthaya chronicle was made a recension by Krom Luang Wongsathiratchasanit as a command of King Mongkut. Later, the King also corrected in his own handwriting (Phraratcha phongsawadan chabab phraratchahatthalekha 1968, 7).

10. *Statements of Ex-king Uthumphorn* (*Khamhaikan Khun Luang Hawat*), an account given by King Uthumphorn who was taken captive by the Burmese in 1767 (Piriya 1992a, 39). The original version was written in Burmese. Krom Luang Wongsathiratchasanit translated it into Thai at the command of King Mongkut and named it *Phraratcha phongsawadan plae chak phasa Raman* (*The Royal Chronicle translated from Raman Language*). However, one part of it was lost. Prince Damrong then completed the lost part adding content from *Statements of the residents of the old capital* (*Khamhaikan Chao Krung Kao*), and named it '*Khamhaikan Khun Luang Hawat chabab luang*' (Khamhaikan Khun Luang Hawat 1972, 296-298).

11. *Statements of the Residents of the old capital* (*Khamhaikan Chao Krung Kao*), which is an account by residents of Ayutthaya taken captive by Burmese in 1767. The Vajirayan National Library received the original version in Burmese in 1911. It was translated into Thai in 1912 (*Khamhaikan Chao Krung Kao* 1972, (1)).

12. *The Short history of Occurrences in the Past and the Succession of Kings of Siam as far as is Known from the Old Histories* written by Jeremias van Vliet, director of the Dutch East India Company at Ayutthaya, in 1640 (Piriya 1992a, 39).

13. *Description of the Kingdom of Siam* by Jeremias van Vliet, translated by L.F. van Ravenswaay and published in 1910 in *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. VII, part 1, page 1-105.

14. *The Natural and Political History of the Kingdom of Siam* written in 1688 by Nicolas Gervaise, who spent four years in Siam during 1683-1686 (Piriya 1992a, 41).

15. *A Description of the Kingdom of Siam*, written in 1690 by Engelbert Kaempfer, German man who spent twenty-three days in Ayutthaya during 12 June- 4 July 1690 (Fine Art Department 1944, 1).

16. *A Relation of the Voyage to Siam: Performed by Six Jesuits sent by the French King, to the Indies and China in the year 1685*, by Guy Tachard, who visited Ayutthaya three times in 1685, 1687 and during King Phetracha's reign (Fine Art Department 1976, [i]-[v]).

Appendix B The Inscription of King Ramkhamhaeng the Great[1]

My father was named Sri Indraditya, my mother was named Nang Suang, my elder brother was named Ban Muang. There were five of us born from the same womb: three boys and two girls. My eldest brother died when he was still a child.

When I was nineteen year old, Khun Sam Chon, the ruler of Muang Chot, came to raid Muang Tak. My father went to fight Khun Sam Chon on the left; Khun Sam Chon drove forward on the right. Khun Sam Chon charged in; my father's men fled in conclusion. I did not flee. I mounted my elephant, named Bekhpon, and push him ahead in front of my father. I fought an elephant duel with Khun Sam Chon. I fought Khun Sam Chon's elephant, Mas Muang by name, and beat him. Khun Sam Chon fled. Then my father named me Phra Ramkhamhaeng because I fought Khun Sam Chon's elephant.

In my father's lifetime I served my father and I served my mother. When I caught any game or fish I brought them to my father. When I picked any acid or sweet fruits that were delicious and good to eat, I bought them to my father. When I went hunting elephant and caught some, either by lasso or by driving them into a corral, I brought them to my father. When I raided a town or village and captured elephants, men and women, silver or gold, I turned them over to my father. When my father died, my elder brother was still alive, I served him steadfastly as I had served my father. When my elder brother died, I got the whole kingdom for myself.

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[1] Source: Chulalongkorn University (ed.). (1984). *The Inscription of King Ramkhamhaeng the Great*. Bangkok: Rongphim Chulalongkorn Mahawitthayalai.

In the time of King Ramkhamhaeng this land of Sukhothai is thriving. There are fish in the water and rice in the fields. The lord of the realm does not levy toll on its subjects. They are free to lead their cattle or ride their horses to engage in trade; whoever wants to trade in elephants, does so; whoever wants to trade in horses, does so; whoever wants to trade in silver or gold, does so. When any commoner or man of rank dies, his estate- his elephant, wives, children, relatives, rice granaries, retainers and groves of areca and betel- is left in its entirely to his son. When commoners or men of rank differ and disagree, the King examines the case to get at the truth and then settles it justly for them. He does not connive with thieves or favour concealers of stolen goods. When he sees someone's belongings, he does not covet them; when he sees someone's wealth, he does not get envious. If anyone riding an elephant comes to him to put his own country under his protection, he helps him, treats him generously, and takes care of him; if someone comes to him with no elephants, no horses, no men or women, no silver or gold, he gives him some, and helps him until he can establish a state of his own. When he captures enemy warriors or their chiefs, he does not kill them or beat them.

There is a bell hanging at the gate; if any commoner in the land is involved in a quarrel and wants to make his case known to his ruler and lord, it is easy; he goes and strikes the bell which the King has hung there; King Ramkhamhaeng, the ruler of the kingdom, hears the bell; he calls the man in and questions him, examines the case, and decides it justly for him. So the people of this land of Sukhothai praise him. They plant areca groves all over the city; coconut groves and jackfruit groves are planted in abundance in the city. Anyone who plants them gets them for himself and keeps them. Inside this city there is a pond called Taphang Poisi, the water of which is as clear and delicious as

the water of the Khong in dry season. The triple rampart surrounding this city of Sukhothai measures three thousand four hundred wa.

The people of this city of Sukhothai like to observe the precepts and bestow alms. King Ramkhamhaeng, the ruler of this city of Sukhothai, as well as the prince and the princess, the men and women of rank, and all the noblefolk without exception, both male and female, all have faith in the religion of the Buddha, and all observe the precepts during the rainy season. At the close of the rainy season they celebrate the Kathin ceremonies, which last a month, with heaps of cowries, with heaps of areca nuts, with heaps of flowers, with cushions and pillows: the gifts they present to the monks as accessories to the Kathin amount to two million (cowries) each year. Everyone goes to the Araññika over there for the Kathin ceremonies. When they are ready to return to the city they walk together, forming a line all the way from the Araññika to the parade-ground. They join together in striking up the sound of musical instruments, chanting and singing. Whoever wants to make merry, does so; whoever wants to laugh, does so. As this city of Sukhothai has four very big gates, and as the people always crowd together to come in and watch the lighting of candles and setting off of fireworks, the city is noisy as if it was bursting.

Inside this city of Sukhothai, there are *viharas*, there are golden statues of the Buddha, and Phra Attharos statues; there are big statues of Buddha and medium-sized ones, there are big *viharas* and medium-sized ones; there are senior monks—*nissayamuttakas*, *theras* and *mahatheras*.

West of the city of Sukhothai is Araññika, where King Ramkhamhaeng bestows alms to the Mahathera Sangharaja, the sage who has studied the *Tripitaka* from beginning to

end, who is wiser than any other monk in the kingdom, and who has come here from Muang Sri Dhammaraja. Inside the Araññika there is a large rectangular *vihara*, tall and exceeding beautiful, and a Phra Attharos statue standing up.

East of the city of Sukhothai there are *viharas* and senior monks, there is a vast open field, there are groves of areca and betel, upland and lowland farms, homesteads, large and small villages, groves of mango and tamarind. They are as beautiful to look at as if they were made for that purpose.

North of this city of Sukhothai there is a bazaar, there is Phra Acana, there are *prasadas*, there are groves of coconut and jackfruit, upland and lowland farms, homesteads, large and small villages.

South of this city of Sukhothai there are *kutis* and *viharas* where monks reside, there is a dam, there are groves of coconut and jackfruit, groves of mango and tamarind, there are small mountain springs and there is Phra Khaphung. The divine spirit of that mountain is more powerful than any other spirit in this kingdom. Whatever lord may rule this kingdom of Sukhothai, if he makes obeisance to him properly, with the right offerings, this kingdom will thrive; but if obeisance is not made properly or the offerings are not right, the spirit of the mountain will no longer protect it and the kingdom will be lost.

In 1214 *saka*, a year of the dragon, King Ramkhamhaeng, lord of this kingdom of Sri Sajjanalai- Sukhothai, who had planted these sugar palm trees fourteen years before, commanded his craftsmen to carve a slab of stone and place it in the midst of these sugar palm trees. On the day of the new moon, the eighth day of the waxing moon, the day of the full moon, and the eighth day of the waning moon, the monks, *thereas* or

mahatheras go up and sit on the stone slab to preach the Dhamma to the throng of lay people who observe the precepts. When it is not a day for preaching the Dhamma, King Ramkhamhaeng, lord of the kingdom of Sri Sajjanalai- Sukhothai, goes up, sits on the stone slab, and gives audience to the officials, lords, princes and those who conduct affairs of state. On the day of the new moon and the day of the full moon, when the white elephant named Rucagri has been decked out in howdah and tasseled head cloth, and always with gold on both tusks, King Ramkhamhaeng mounts him, rides away to the Araññika to pay homage to the Buddha, and then returns.

There is an inscription in the city of Chaliang, erected beside the Sri Ratanadhatu; there is an inscription in the cave called Phra Ram's Cave, which is located on the bank of the River Samphai; and there is an inscription in the Ratanadhatu Cave. In this Sugar Palm Grove there are two pavilions, one named Sala Phra Mas, one named Buddhasala. This slab of stone is named Manangsilabat. It is installed here for everyone to see.

King Ramkhamhaeng, son of King Sri Indraditya, is lord of the kingdom of Sri Sajjanalai- Sukhothai, and all the Ma, Kao, the Lao, the Thai of distant lands, and the Thai who live along the U and the Khong come to pay homage.

In 1207 *saka*, a year of the boar, he caused the holy relics to be dug up so that everyone could see them. They were worshiped and celebrated for a month and six days, then they were buried in the middle of Sri Sajjanalai, and a *cetiya* was built on top of them which was finished in six years. A wall of rock enclosing Phra Mahadhatu was built which was finished in three years.

Formerly these Thai letters did not exist. In 1205 *saka*, a year of the goat, King Ramkhamhaeng set his mind and his heart on devising these Thai letters. So these Thai letters exist because that lord devised them.

King Ramkhamhaeng is sovereign over all the Thai. He is the teacher who teaches all the Thai to understand merit and the Dhamma rightly. Among men who live in the land of the Thai, there is no one who equals him in knowledge and wisdom, in bravery and courage, in strength and energy. He is able to subdue a throng of enemies and possesses broad kingdoms and many elephants.

The places whose submission he receives on the east include Sra Luang Song Kwae, Lumbachai, Sakha, the bank of the Khong, Wiangchan and Wiangkham, which is the farthest place; on the south they include Khonthi, Phra Bang, Phraek, Suphannaphum, Ratchaburi, Phetchaburi, Sri Dhammaraja, and the seacoast, which is the farthest place; on the west they include Muang Chot, Muang...n, and Hongsawadi, the seas being their limit; on the north, they include Muang Phrae, Muang Man, Muang N... Muang Phlua and, beyond the banks of the Khong, Muang Chawa, which is the farthest place. All the people who live in these lands have been reared by him in accordance with the Dhamma, every one of them.

Appendix C Kings of Siam-Thailand[2]

Sukhothai period

1. King Sri Inthrathit		1257-?
2. King Ban Muang		?- 1279
3. King Rankhamhaeng		1279-1298
4. King Loe Thai		
5. King Ngua Nam Thom		-1347
6. King Mahathammaracha I (Li Thai, Lue thai)		1347- around 1368
7. King Mahathammaracha II		around 1399-1419
8. King Mahathammaracha III		around 1399-1419
9. King Mahathammaracha IV		1419- around 1438

Ayutthaya period

Chiang-rai Dynasty :	1. King Ramathibodi I (U-Thong)	1350-1369
	2. King Ramesuan (first time)	1369-1370
Suphannaphum Dynasty:	3. King Borommarachathirat I	1370-1388
	4. King Thonglan (Thongchan)	1388
Chiang-rai Dynasty:	King Ramesuan (second time)	1388-1395
	5. King Phraya Ram (Ramrachathirat)	1395-1409
Suphannaphum Dynasty:	6. King Intharachathirat (Nakhon-in, Nakharainrachathirat)	1409-1424

[2] Source: Subhaddradis Diskul, M.C. (1996). Silpa nai Prathat Thai. (Art in Thailand). Bangkok: Rongphim Mahawitthayalai Thammasat. And Santi Leksukhum. (1999). Silpa Ayutthaya nganchang luang khong phaendin (Ayutthaya Art: the Royal Craft of the Land). Bangkok: Muang Boran.

	7. King Borommarachathirat II	1424-1448
	(Chao Sam Phraya)	
	8. King King Borommatrailokkanat	
	- Ayutthaya	1448-1463
	- Phitsanulok	1463-1488
	9. King Borommarachathirat III	1488-1491
	10. King Ramathibodi II	1491-1529
	11. King Borommarachathirat IV	1529-1533
	12. King Ratsadathiratkumara	1533-1534
	13. King Chairachathirat	1534-1546
	14. King Yodfa	1546-1548
	(Khun Worawongsa	June-July 1548)
	15. King Chakkraphat Rachathirat	1548-1568
	16. King Mahintrathirat	1568-1569
Sukhothai Dynasty:	17. King Mahathammarachathirat	1569-1590
	18. King Naresuan the Great	1590-1605
	19. King Ekathotsarot	1605-1610
	20. King Sri Saowaphak	1610
	21. King Song Tham	1610-1628
	22. King Chetthathirat	1628
	23. King Athittayawong	1629
Prasatthong Dynasty:	24. King Prasatthong	1629-1656
	25. King Chai	1656
	26. King Srisuthammarachathirat	1656
	27. King Narai	1656-1688

Banphluluang Dynasty:	28. King Phetracha	1688-1702
	29. King Suea	1702-1708
	30. King Thai Sa	1708-1732
	31. King Borommakot	1732-1758
	32. King Uthumphorn	1758
	33. King Ekathat	1758-1767

Thonburi period

King Taksin	1767-1782	

Rattanakosin period

Chakri Dynasty:	1. King Rama I (Yodfa)	1782-1809
	2. King Rama II (Lert La)	1809-1824
	3. King Rama III (Nangklao)	1824-1851
	4. King Rama IV (Mongkut)	1851-1868
	5. King Rama V (Chulalongkorn)	1868-1910
	6. King Rama VI (Vajiravudh)	1910-1925
	7. King Rama VII (Prachathipok) (abdicated)	1925-1935
	8. King Rama VIII (Anandthamahidol)	1935-1946
	9. King Rama IX (Bhumibol)	1946- the present

Appendix D List of informants

Anuvit Chareonsupphakul. A lecturer at the Department of Related Arts in Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University. Interview, 5 July 1999, Silpakorn University, Bangkok.

Michael Wright. An amateur historian. Interview, 2 May 2000, Music Art Centre, Bangkok Bank, Bangkok.

Pathomroek Katethat. A lecturer at the Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, Thammasat University. Interview, 11 May 2000, Thammasat University, Bangkok.

Phiset Chiachanphong. Archaeological specialist (Archaeology and Museums), Bangkok National Museum. Interview, 4 May 2000, Bangkok National Museum, Bangkok.

Phitthaya Bunnak. A lecturer of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Chiangmai University. Interview, 22 May 2000, Bangkok Domestic Airport, Bangkok.

Piriya Krairiksh. A lecturer at the Department of History, Faculty of Arts, Thammasat University. Interview, 25 June 2000, New House Condominium, Bangkok.

Sakchai Saisin. A lecturer at the Department of Art History, Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University. Interview, 19 April 2000, Silpakorn University, Bangkok.

Sanoe Nildej. A lecturer at the Department of Related Arts in Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University. Interview, 18 April 2000, Silpakorn University, Bangkok.

Santi Leksukhum. A lecturer at the Department of Art History, Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University. Interview, 18 April 2000, Silpakorn University, Bangkok.

Saran Thongphan. A Journalist. Muang Boran Journal. Interview, 15 May 2000, the office of Muang Boran Journal, Bangkok.

Smitthi Siribhaddra. A university lecturer at the Department of Art History, Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University. Interview, 29 April 2000, Wat Boworaniwetwihan, Bangkok.

Srisak Wanliphodom. A former lecturer at the Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University. Interview, 9 June 2000, the office of Muang Boran Journal, Bangkok.

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[1] Thai authors are alphabetised by their first names.

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